



Natural Resources Conservation Service

Regional Conservation Partnership Program 2023 Awarded Projects

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is making historic investments to the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) and streamlining the program to make it work better for producers and partners. This combination will deliver conservation at a scale never before achieved through RCPP. This year, more than \$1 billion is being invested to advance partner-driven solutions to conservation on agricultural land through 81 projects. See below for the awarded projects:

Partnership to Advance Climate-Resilient Longleaf Restoration and Conservation on Private Lands in Alabama and Georgia

Lead Partner: National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: CCA

CCA (if Applicable): Longleaf Pine Range

Lead State: AL

Total Funding Request: \$25,000,000.00

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and partners will leverage RCPP funding to deliver technical and financial assistance to private landowners to actively manage planted longleaf stands, voluntarily conserve existing longleaf, and implement climate-smart forest practices to support long-term, sustainable carbon and wildlife outcomes. The goals for this project are to engage 5,000 private landowners to restore, enhance and conserve 150,000 acres of longleaf pine on private land in Alabama and Georgia over five years.

Expand and Evaluate Private Investment in Partnership with NRCS

Lead Partner: Restore the Earth Foundation, Inc.

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: CCA

CCA (if Applicable): Mississippi River Basin

Lead State: AR

Total Funding Request: \$25,000,000.00

Restore the Earth Foundation, Inc. (REF), in collaboration with 4 partners, will implement a \$55 million public-private partnership, in which private sector funds will invest with NRCS to achieve environmental and social goals. The project targets the acquisition of US Held Easements to restore marginal cropland to its previous forested condition in Arkansas. The project has 5 objectives: 1. Demonstrate that private sector investments in ACEP-WRE can be profitable; 2. Increase the number of acres of marginal lands in Arkansas restored to forest vegetation and protected via permanent easements; 3 Improve environmental, social and economic conditions for local producers and communities; 4. Document and account for the impacts and co-benefits resulting from restoration; 5. Generate income from the sale of co-benefits, shared with participating producers and to fund future projects.

Protecting and Enhancing Wildlife Habitat and Water Quality of Conservation Reserve Program Tracts under Threat of Conversion in the Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley

Lead Partner: Mississippi River Trust

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: CCA

CCA (if Applicable): Mississippi River Basin

Lead State: AR

Total Funding Request: \$25,000,000.00

The Protecting Wildlife and Water Quality in the Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley project will convert approximately 7,500 acres of vulnerable bottomland hardwood and wetland Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) tracts to permanently protected, U.S.-held conservation easements within the Lower Mississippi River Alluvial Valley (LMAV) of Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. These tracts could be cleared and prior U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) conservation investments lost. This project will target the protection and enhancement of high-quality forest habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife, improve local water quality, support groundwater recharge, and increase sequestration of atmospheric carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases.

NWA Small and Urban Farm Preservation

Lead Partner: Northwest Arkansas Land Trust

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: AR

Total Funding Request: \$650,000.00

This Northwest Arkansas Land Trust's NWA Small and Urban Farm Preservation project will permanently protect 60 to 120 acres of small and urban farmland with prime soils, soils of statewide significance in addition to the farmland and grasslands within targeted parcels critical to access these important soils. This project targets historically underserved farmers enabling them to grow and sustain viable farm enterprises, while we ensure future generations of farmers have access to working lands.

Westside Pipeline and Blackwater Laterals

Lead Partner: Gila River Indian Community

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: CCA

CCA (if Applicable): Colorado River Basin

Lead State: AZ

Total Funding Request: \$22,865,854.00

The Gila River Indian Community (Community), through the Westside Pipeline and Blackwater Laterals project will increase agriculture on-reservation while helping the community adapt to droughts made worse by the impacts of climate change. Combining \$25M of RCPP funding with \$80M of partner contributions, this project will construct at least 8.5 miles of pipeline to replace open channel canals and upgrading 7.61 miles of existing earthen ditches, to reduce water loss within the system. This investment will have the added benefit of protecting soil productivity while conserving scarce water resources in a time of extraordinary drought and aridification in the Southwest.

Upper Verde River Watershed - Aquifer Protection and Resilient Grassland Conservation Strategy

Lead Partner: The Nature Conservancy

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: CCA

CCA (if Applicable): Colorado River Basin

Lead State: AZ

Total Funding Request: \$12,439,024.00

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) will address pressing water-related challenges, protect high-quality grassland habitat, and enhance wildlife connectivity in the Upper Verde River watershed of Arizona. This project will use RCPP funds to create a voluntary, incentive-based program that preserves the natural resources and agricultural uses of the focus area. The tool for achieving goals will be the strategic implementation of entity-held conservation easements, with a 5-year goal of the perpetual encumbrance of up to 20,000 acres of private lands in the Colorado River Basin Critical Conservation Area.

Arizona Strip Wildlife and Livestock Habitat Improvement

Lead Partner: Mule Deer Foundation

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: AZ

Total Funding Request: \$1,219,512.00

The Arizona Strip Wildlife and Livestock Habitat Improvement project will address inadequate habitat, water, food availability, and connectivity for a suite of wildlife species. Funded projects will focus on objectives in three main resource areas. This project will improve rangeland habitat for wildlife including pronghorn (a species of concern) and mule deer. This will be accomplished, in part, by the removal of invading woody species such as juniper, and in certain instances pinyon, from approximately 3000 acres. This will allow native grass, browse, and forb species to return to these areas. The Mule Deer Foundation anticipates this will improve water distribution across approximately 253,000 acres.

Climate-Smart Dairies: A Partnership for Enteric Methane Reduction using Novel Feed Additives

Lead Partner: Dairy Farmers of America

Project Type: AFA

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: CA

Total Funding Request: \$22,865,854.00

The Climate-Smart Dairies Partnership project aims to support dairy farmers as they seek to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions while also improving recordkeeping and expanding the dairy profit chain by implementing an integrated system that includes advanced methane avoidance technology, emission reduction tracking, and a customer-focused carbon marketplace. Project objectives include: (1) implement enhanced feed additives on up to 50 operations (140,000 head) in selected regions to reduce methane emissions by an estimated 130,410 MT of CO₂ equivalents per year; (2) track methane reduction progress via a state-of-the-art cloud-based platform; (3) diversify dairy farm revenue sources by facilitating the sale of resulting carbon credits to in value-chain dairy product processors; and (4) demonstrate the potential to achieve dairy climate neutrality.

Absolute Enteric Methane Reductions in California Dairies; a New Frontier in the Journey to Net Zero

Lead Partner: California Dairies, Inc.

Project Type: AFA

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: CA

Total Funding Request: \$21,431,689.00

Through feed-based interventions, California Dairies will help producers reduce and avoid greenhouse gas (GHG). The Absolute Enter Methane Reductions in California Dairies project will help kickstart the use of these feed additives in a market that accounts for 9% of US' on-farm milk supply. This approach aims to reduce the GHG footprint of the dairy industry by 35%, a great start to achieving the industry's goal of net zero GHG by 2050.

Elevated Foods California Water Conservation

Lead Partner: Elevated Foods

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: CA

Total Funding Request: \$12,147,018.00

The Elevated Foods California Water Conservation project will install and implement

high-efficiency irrigation systems. These activities will reduce water consumption by over 154,000 acre-feet in water scarce regions, reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 12,623 metric tons, mitigate erosion, improve soil health, and foster enriched habitats. Outcomes will be determined through soil tests, water audits, and community surveys.

Colorado Northern Front Range RCPP

Lead Partner: Jefferson Conservation District

Project Type: AFA

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: CO

Total Funding Request: \$13,462,500.00

The Colorado Northern Front Range Project will use land management contracts with producers to primarily improve aquatic and terrestrial habitat, reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire, and protect drinking and irrigation source water supply. Lead by the Jefferson Conservation District, this project in Colorado's Northern Front Range; these mountainous watersheds are upstream of many cities, including Denver, Boulder, and Fort Collins. In the project area ecosystems have been disturbed through hurricanes, floods, or wildlife through overgrazing, unsustainable logging, and fire suppression. The project plans to implement over 4,000 acres of forest treatments, 8,000 acres of noxious weed treatments, and 100 acres of riparian habitat restoration on non-industrial private forest land.

Lake to Lagoon RCPP

Lead Partner: Alachua Conservation Trust

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: FL

Total Funding Request: \$25,000,000.00

The Lake to Lagoon is a low-lying region of East Central Florida bounded by large lakes and rivers on the west boundary, and Mosquito and Indian River Lagoons along the Atlantic Coast. The nearly 1.2 million-acre region is home to nearly a million Floridians, as well as a diversity of wildlife, wildlands, and rural farms and timberlands. The Lake to Lagoon faces major climate-induced changes, including

increased sea level rise, storm intensity, droughts and wildfire. Moreover, county populations will increase by 20-50% by midcentury. The Alachua Conservation Trust, through the Lake to Lagoon project, will accelerate land protection and land management to protect environmentally sensitive and working lands and benefit regional climate mitigation.

Corridor to Coast (C2C)

Lead Partner: North Florida Land Trust

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: FL

Total Funding Request: \$15,243,902.00

This Corridor to Coast (C2C) project will protect and improve ecological conditions of the C2C Corridor all the way out to the East Coast. This includes protection of natural areas, wildlife habitat, and regional water quality as compatible with working lands and the natural resource-based economy of the area. In conjunction, the North Florida Land Trust aims to promote conservation activities that assists State and Federal military installations with sustaining their military training mission. Through the Army Compatible Use Buffer program, funding is available to complement protection of land around the training center in Camp Blanding, located within the heart of the C2C.

Managing Native Vegetation for Climate Mitigation through Grassland Bird Conservation in Georgia and Mississippi

Lead Partner: National Bobwhite and Grassland Initiative Foundation, Inc

Project Type: AFA

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: GA

Total Funding Request: \$25,000,000.00

The Managing Native Vegetation for Climate Mitigation project, led by the National Bobwhite and Grassland Initiative Foundation, will improve populations of northern bobwhite and a suite of grassland birds using NRCS Climate Smart practices to rebuild open pine communities, production edges, idle areas, and open spaces that have reverted to trees in GA and MS. The project will address multiple natural resource

concerns including carbon sequestration, wildlife habitat, water quality, and soil health.

Georgia Sentinel Landscape Climate Smart Forest Conservation

Lead Partner: Georgia Conservancy, Inc.

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: CCA

CCA (if Applicable): Longleaf Pine Range

Lead State: GA

Total Funding Request: \$10,329,268.00

The Georgia Sentinel Landscape Climate Smart Forest Conservation Project will implement both traditional and climate smart agriculture and forestry practices to: 1) address soil, water and plant resource concerns within historic longleaf lands of the Chattahoochee, Flint, Ogeechee, and Altamaha River Watersheds 2) protect wildlife habitat across the Georgia Sentinel Landscape and within the Longleaf Pine Range critical conservation area. The objective is to preserve existing longleaf forest lands through forest conservation easements of up to 5000 acres paired with prescribed fire cost-share of 10,000 acres. The Georgia Sentinel Landscape encompasses gopher tortoise corridors across 60 counties and 9 military installations which also contain 90% of the historic longleaf lands within Georgia and prime soils. The Department of Defense Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration will provide matching funds for forest conservation easements

Enhancing Hawaii's Forests to Reduce Land-Based Sources of Pollution

Lead Partner: Hawaii Division of Forestry and Wildlife

Project Type: AFA

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: HI

Total Funding Request: \$5,178,702.00

The Enhancing Hawaii's Forests to Reduce Land-Based Sources of Pollution project will work with producers to help restore and manage Hawaii's private forestland by installing forestry practices on non-industrial forest land. These forests provide habitat for most of the state's endangered species – which total over 400 species and comprise a third of the nation's listed species. The project includes restoration of high-elevation forests that have been fragmented by non-native hooved animals and

fires will be particularly critical for the two-dozen listed forest bird species. Producers will implement practices such as Brush Management, Tree Establishment, Forest Stand Improvement, Herbaceous Weed Control, and Upland Wildlife Habitat Management. The Hawaii Division of Forestry and Wildlife anticipates that this project will plant 75,000 trees and remove invasive weeds from 2,700 acres.

Ainapreneur Rural Farmer Conservation Collective

Lead Partner: Changemakers Community Economic Development Corporation

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: HI

Total Funding Request: \$1,304,878.00

The goal of Hiiaka Function Project is to reverse climate change by growing healthy soil that captures and stores carbon. To achieve this goal, Hiiaka Function will utilize biochar to create healthy soil and store carbon. By the end of year one, Hiiaka Function will create a biochar-use educational program for Native Hawaiian organizations and farmers. By the end of year two, Hiiaka Function will create a trained biochar soil workforce to create, distribute and measure the effectiveness of biochar for Native Hawaiian organizations and farmers. At the end of five years, Hiiaka Function will distribute biochar to 20 Native Hawaiian organizations and farmers with degraded soil through NRCS financial assistance contracts.

Protection and Restoration of Grasslands in Iowa

Lead Partner: Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation

Project Type: AFA

Funding Pool: CCA

CCA (if Applicable): Prairie Grasslands Region

Lead State: IA

Total Funding Request: \$22,987,805.00

The Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation will restore 10,000 acres of grassland and protect approximately 8,000 acres with entity-held conservation easements in a 40-county area of western and southern Iowa. The Protection and Restoration of Grasslands in Iowa will emphasize targeting the nationally recognized Loess Hills Landform, a Grassland of Special Environmental Significance.

Protect Rathbun Lake

Lead Partner: Rathbun Land and Water Alliance

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: IA

Total Funding Request: \$8,712,954.00

The Protect Rathbun Lake project's goal is to reduce the sediment and sediment-bound phosphorus loads that cause water quality impairments in Rathbun Lake. Specifically, the objectives are the reduction in annual sediment load to the lake by 66,590 tons and the reduction in annual phosphorus load to the lake by 65,250 pounds. The Rathbun Land and Water Alliance will leverage RCPP and partner funding to address resource concerns related to soil erosion, soil quality, livestock production, aquatic habitat, and greenhouse gases. The project goal and objectives will be achieved by completing the land management and land rental activities to be carried out during the initial five-year implementation period of the new Rathbun Lake Watershed Management and Source Water Protection Plan (2023). Rathbun Lake is the source of water for Rathbun Regional Water Association's (RRWA) water treatment plants. RRWA is the largest rural water system in Iowa. Rathbun Lake also provides recreational opportunities for one million visitors annually, downstream flood damage reduction, and fish and wildlife habitat in the lake and on adjacent public land. The lake's watershed covers 354,000 acres.

Scott County Iowa Working Lands for Resilient Communities

Lead Partner: Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

Project Type: AFA

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: IA

Total Funding Request: \$8,000,000.00

Ducks Unlimited, through the Scott County Iowa Working Lands for Resilient Communities project will install Climate SMART conservation practices such as in field and edge of field wetland restoration to improve water availability (flood and drought), water quality, soil health, and wildlife habitat. A "batch and build" concept will be used to expedite installation of conservation practices that require engineering support (e.g., saturated buffers) benefitting multiple producer operations within Scott County, IA. Benchmark and post treatment data from Local

monitoring stations will support models such as the Water Erosion Prediction Project and HydroGeoSphere to report peak flow and nutrient loss reduction and carbon sequestration outcomes.

Cover Crop and Water Quality Program

Lead Partner: GROWMARK Inc.

Project Type: AFA

Funding Pool: CCA

CCA (if Applicable): Mississippi River Basin

Lead State: IA

Total Funding Request: \$4,573,171.00

The Cover Crop and Water Quality Program aims to remove cover crop implementation barriers faced by growers. Growmark Inc and other partners will source the seed, plant, manage and terminate the cover crops on behalf of busy producers. The project will use proprietary satellite imagery and analytics monitor the crops from planting to harvest and identify nitrogen deficiencies and other issues impacting cover crops implementation, as well as quantify carbon sequestration and nitrous oxide emissions reductions.

Connecting Wildlife Habitat by Integrating Conservation Corridors on Working Lands

Lead Partner: Iowa Wildlife Federation

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: CCA

CCA (if Applicable): Prairie Grasslands Region

Lead State: IA

Total Funding Request: \$3,739,800.00

Iowa Wildlife Federation will work to connect existing wildlife habitat, especially those that are of high value but disconnected from each other, to create wildlife corridors for all species with a special emphasis on pollinators and monarch butterflies. The project will convert 1500 acres of working lands into prairie and 100 acres into wetlands and micro wetlands. This will integrate working lands into the Iowa State Wildlife Action Plan.

2023 Burnett Irrigation Ditch

Lead Partner: Butte Soil and Water Conservation District

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: ID

Total Funding Request: \$3,658,537.00

The Butte Soil and Water Conservation District will address Irrigation efficiencies, surface/ground water source protection, and improving aquatic habitat. This will be accomplished by enclosing the 11 miles of open ditch to a closed pipeline system. The Burnett Irrigation Ditch project will reduce surface water shrink and evaporation within the canal, in turn reducing diversion rates which will increase flows in the Big Lost River which support a unique population of Mountain White Fish. Ground water source re-saved by delivering surface water efficiently will allow producers to shut supplemental ground water wells off saving aquifer levels. Secondary resource concerns will be achieved by reduced conveyance of weed seed source through an open ditch to downstream user's properties, eliminating a source of noxious and invasive pest pressure. The system generates enough elevation fall from the natural topography that pumping horsepower can be reduced, possibly even eliminated. Excess power generated on the closed pipeline will reduce greenhouse gasses generated by these pumping locations.

Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions on Idaho Dairy Farms

Lead Partner: Newtrient LLC

Project Type: AFA

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: ID

Total Funding Request: \$3,125,000.00

Newtrient LLC seeks to increase the adoption of methane-emission-reducing NRCS conservation practices focused on manure management and feed management. The Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions on Idaho Dairy Farms will creatively pair public and private funds to deliver economically viable conservation solutions to Idaho dairy producers by increasing producer-specific financial and technical assistance incentives. This project seeks to enroll ten producers, impacting 12,000 cows, resulting in a reduction of methane emissions by 37,500 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent.

2023 Blaine County Canal Company Pipeline

Lead Partner: Butte Soil and Water Conservation District

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: ID

Total Funding Request: \$2,439,024.00

Currently an open canal system conveys water across private lands to places of use on private farmlands. The Blaine County Canal Company Pipeline, in collaboration with multiple partners: Trout Unlimited, NRCS, Butte SWCD, Butte County Road and Bridge, and Rocky Mountain Power. BCCC will convert this 61k ft of open canal into a closed pipeline. By reducing infiltration and evaporation, reduced diversion rates from the Little Lost River (LLR) will benefit aquatic organism and maintain aquatic habitat integrity in the LLR while improving water quality, while continuing to serve as a local example of the irrigation pipeline conservation practice and collaborative conservation planning and implementation.

Infield Conservation for Operationalizing Vital Ecosystem Resilience (I-COVER)

Lead Partner: Illinois Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Land and Water Resources

Project Type: AFA

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: IL

Total Funding Request: \$19,573,171.00

The Illinois Department of Agriculture, through the Infield Conservation for Operationalizing Vital Ecosystems Resilience (iCOVER) project, will help producers plant 1.5 million acres across the three states (IL, IA & IN). This will result in the sequestration of an estimated 4.5 million metric tons of CO2 equivalent, reduce N losses by 30% during the 5-year project. This project will create the iCOVER Corps in partnership with community colleges in each state to offer an in-field cover crop batch-and build-custom service to producers that will facilitate timely seeding and/or management of the practice.

Advancing Farmer-Led Incentives in the Midwest

Lead Partner: Sand County Foundation

Project Type: AFA

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: IL

Total Funding Request: \$13,841,756.00

The Advancing Farmer-Led Incentives in the Midwest project will apply soil health and continuous living cover practices through locally designed financial incentives to farmers led by local partners in three Midwestern states. This project prioritizes improving local water resources via improved soil health and on-farm nutrient retention toward reaching Gulf of Mexico Hypoxia Task Force goals. Nutrient loss and GHG reductions, and carbon sequestration outcomes will be modeled using COMET-Planner and partnership developed Project-based County-level Outcomes Calculator and Nutrient Tracking Tool.

Metro Chicago RCPP: Expanding Land Access and Grower Resources in a Regional Food System

Lead Partner: The Conservation Fund

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: IL

Total Funding Request: \$7,975,610.00

The Metro Chicago RCPP project will (1) ensure Historically Underserved farmers access USDA resources and programs and develop lifelong relationships with the agency to support their farm ownership, farm viability, risk reduction, financing, production and conservation goals; (2) accelerate the use of conservation easements in a top farmland state experiencing significant farmland conversion, but with limited NRCS conservation easement implementation to date; and (3) increase supplies of locally-grown, healthy food for a resilient regional food system, addressing food insecurity. This project, led by the Conservation Fund, will result in a more resilient regional food system, thriving diverse local economies, increased adoption of conservation practices, and access to healthy food.

Illinois Sand Prairie Wetlands Program

Lead Partner: Illinois Department of Natural Resources

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: CCA

CCA (if Applicable): Mississippi River Basin

Lead State: IL

Total Funding Request: \$1,389,798.00

The objectives of the Illinois Sand Prairie Wetlands project will create or and rehabilitate a minimum of 30 ephemeral wetlands through this RCPP that attract Illinois Chorus Frogs. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources will furth amplify the impact of RCPP funding by administering a survey to participating landowners to identify what variables influenced their interest in the program. This project will raise local awareness of the NRCS conservation programs and other conservation tools.

Southern Indiana Sentinel Landscape

Lead Partner: Conservation Law Center / Southern Indiana Sentinel Landscape

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: CCA

CCA (if Applicable): Mississippi River Basin

Lead State: IN

Total Funding Request: \$24,623,870.00

The Southern Indiana Sentinel Landscape (SISL) RCPP will increase the ability of producers, cropland owners, and forestland owners within the SISL to permanently protect and sustainably manage their farms and forests through the use of forestland easements, cropland practices, and forestry practices. These conservation activities will permanently protect habitat for two federally endangered bat species, conserve and restore thousands of acres of forest land for bat and bird habitat, and bring additional financial and technical resources to help producers implement conservation systems and practices on cropland.

Kansas High Plains Aquifer RCPP

Lead Partner: Kansas Department of Agriculture

Project Type: AFA

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: KS

Total Funding Request: \$24,990,848.00

The Kansas High Plains Aquifer project will work with farmers and ranchers to reduce water use through a combination of NRCS practices including irrigation water management, cover crops, reduced tillage, and nutrient management. The High Plains Aquifer is the largest, most economically important groundwater source in

Kansas. It underlies western and south-central Kansas and is composed of several hydraulically connected aquifers. The Kansas High Plains Aquifer RCPP project seeks to reduce water use in each of the five Kansas Groundwater Management Districts by 10%.

Kansas Nebraska Wetland Initiative

Lead Partner: Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

Project Type: AFA

Funding Pool: CCA

CCA (if Applicable): Prairie Grasslands Region

Lead State: KS

Total Funding Request: \$10,000,000.00

to the Kansas Nebraska Wetland Initiative project will create, restore, and protect wetland and riparian barriers in Nebraska and Kansas. This will be achieved through land management contracts and conservation easements. Much of the states' historic wetland acres have been lost and many existing wetlands are poorly functioning due to factors such as drainage and invasive species. The project will address inadequate habitat for fish, wildlife, and invertebrates, excess/insufficient water/drought, and degraded plant condition. Ducks Unlimited anticipates protecting 5,000 wetland acres, 9,000 upland acres, restore 3,000 acres of upland grassland, and removing 7,000 acres of invasive species.

Kentucky River Palisades Watershed Protection Project

Lead Partner: Bluegrass Land Conservancy, Inc.

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: CCA

CCA (if Applicable): Mississippi River Basin

Lead State: KY

Total Funding Request: \$22,865,854.00

The Kentucky River Palisades Watershed Protection project will lead to the permanent protection of at least 18 miles of riparian corridor and 6,000 acres of contiguous land associated with the Kentucky River Palisades and Elkhorn Creek in the Bluegrass region of Kentucky. This will help protect the connectivity of this critical ecosystem. By requiring buffers along all waterways, this project will minimize the impacts of urban sprawl and climate change on plant and animal species migration.

Greater Louisville Urban Farm Protection Project

Lead Partner: Bluegrass Land Conservancy, Inc.

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: KY

Total Funding Request: \$22,865,854.00

The primary goal of the Greater Louisville Urban Farm Protection Project is the long-term protection of agricultural and natural land in the Louisville metro area, to avoid the climate impacts of urban sprawl, and to preserve critical habitat linkages. In order to accomplish this goal, the project will employ entity-held conservation easements, partially purchased with program funds. In order to aid prioritization, the project will utilize a variety of data sources to develop an innovative, data-driven model to target conservation easement funding to parcels within the project area with the highest social and conservation values

Scaling the Adoption of Adaptive Nitrogen Management Using Low-Cost Cover Crop Imaging and Nitrogen Crediting Technology

Lead Partner: The Nature Conservancy

Project Type: AFA

Funding Pool: CCA

CCA (if Applicable): Chesapeake Bay Watershed

Lead State: MD

Total Funding Request: \$21,723,626.00

The Nature Conservancy will work with producers to implement advanced nutrient management and multi-species cover crops in a region that already has high adoption of conservation tillage. These combined actions will improve water quality and provide climate change adaptation and mitigation. Cover crops combined with conservation tillage practices are particularly good for conserving and building soil health. The mid-Atlantic is expected to increase nitrogen loading in the Chesapeake Bay by 28%, which will complicate efforts to achieve the 2025 Bay Agreement and EPA mandated total maximum daily load. Therefore, adoption of conservation practices that simultaneously mitigate climate change and improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay is needed.

Nature's Climate Solution: Planting Forests and Building Resiliency in Maryland

Lead Partner: Maryland Department of Natural Resources

Project Type: AFA
Funding Pool: CCA
CCA (if Applicable): Chesapeake Bay Watershed
Lead State: MD
Total Funding Request: \$10,000,000.00

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources will work with producers to implement land management practices to address water quality in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. Non-point source load reduction remains a challenging sector, with agricultural land being the largest source of pollution to the Bay. Maryland has ambitious goals related to addressing climate change and improving water quality in the Bay. Planting trees, and ensuring their health through climate smart forest management, helps achieve those goals while providing other important benefits like wildlife habitat and air quality.

Connecting Small and Urban Farms in the Baltimore and Washington D.C. Urban Corridor with Conservation Resources

Lead Partner: Sustainable Chesapeake
Project Type: Classic
Funding Pool: CCA
CCA (if Applicable): Chesapeake Bay Watershed
Lead State: MD
Total Funding Request: \$1,200,000.00

Sustainable Chesapeake's project, Connecting Small and Urban Farms project, is aiming to protect natural resources and increase weather resiliency for urban farmers and the communities they serve in the Baltimore to Washington DC urban corridor, a densely populated region with a high concentration of socially disadvantaged communities with limited access to fresh food. Specific objectives with this project are to increase the number of urban farmers, especially historically underserved farmers, benefiting from NRCS programs and to connect participating farmers with partner financial resources.

Focused In-Stream Habitat (FISH)

Lead Partner: State of Maine, Department of Marine Resources
Project Type: Classic
Funding Pool: CCA
CCA (if Applicable): Northeast Forests and Waters

Lead State: ME

Total Funding Request: \$5,981,860.00

The Focused In-Stream Habitat aims to substantially improve in-stream habitat (including habitat diversity, habitat cover, and sediment sorting) to create spawning and rearing habitat in a focused effort in the three salmon habitat recovery units in Maine. The primary watersheds for this project were chosen based on their documented lack of large wood or insufficient channel complexity, based on physical habitat surveys. The project will implement a suite of NRCS practices, specifically focusing on large, complex in-stream habitat enhancement projects (i.e., engineered log jams and installations using rock and wood), that we expect to improve in-stream habitat and stream function.

Headwaters Restoration

Lead Partner: Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: ME

Total Funding Request: \$2,439,024.00

The Penobscot Indian Nation and the US Fish and Wildlife Service have partnered for the Headwaters Restoration project which will improve fish and aquatic organism passage while restoring and enhancing instream habitat for Eastern brook trout in the mainstem and tributaries of the Kennebec River and in Alder Stream. This project's goals include enhanced climate resilience, a more natural flow regime and sediment transport, and habitat connectivity and associated fish and wildlife benefits.

Tribal Stream and Michigan Fruitbelt Collaborative

Lead Partner: Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa & Chippewa Indians

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: CCA

CCA (if Applicable): Great Lakes Region

Lead State: MI

Total Funding Request: \$20,359,756.00

The Tribal Stream and Michigan Fruitbelt Collaborative's primary goal is the preservation and restoration of the fragmented multi-tribal fisheries and wildlife

populations in northwest Lower Michigan. These natural resources face challenges posed by the modern transportation network's disruption and unsustainable development. The Anishinaabeg people heavily depend on stream crossings within the contemporary transportation system as vital access points, enabling them to exercise their Treaty-protected rights to hunt, fish, trap, and gather resources within the 1836 Treaty of Washington Ceded Territory. Led by the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa & Chippewa Indians, one objective of this project is to rectify 29 problematic stream crossing structures throughout the Ceded Territory. Furthermore, the local waterways and wildlife corridors face additional threats from escalating development pressures. Particularly concerning are the areas proximate to water bodies jointly managed by tribal governments for both commercial and subsistence purposes. To ensure the protection of vital groundwater supplies and to maintain the viability of these pivotal wildlife corridors, a second objective will be undertaken safeguarding 3,700 acres with perpetual conservation easements which will significantly limit development and maintain rainwater infiltration.

Methane Avoidance on Dairy Farms in Michigan Milk Producers Association Region

Lead Partner: Newtrient LLC

Project Type: AFA

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: MI

Total Funding Request: \$6,200,000.00

The Methane Avoidance on Dairy Farms in Michigan project aims to drive high-yielding outcomes from Midwest dairy producers by increasing the adoption of methane-emissions-reducing NRCS conservation practices focused on manure management and feed management. Newtrient LLC will leverage NRCS's RCPP investment of \$6.2million through the delivery of \$2 million in partner cash and in-kind contributions. This project will creatively pair public and private funds to deliver economically viable conservation solutions to Midwest dairy producers by increasing producer-specific technical assistance and financial incentives.

Advancing Soil Health in Minnesota Agriculture

Lead Partner: Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources

Project Type: AFA

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: MN

Total Funding Request: \$25,000,000.00

The Advancing Soil Health in Minnesota Agriculture project will provide financial assistance to producers for on-the-ground soil health management practices and systems. Through this project the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil resource will focus on near-channel erosion, which is the largest source of sediment to the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers, and upland erosion on tilled fields, which is the second largest source of sediment. Outcomes are to This project will reduce pounds of nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment that runoff into the watershed

Increasing on-farm Resilience to Drought and Flood in Missouri

Lead Partner: Missouri Department of Natural Resources

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: CCA

CCA (if Applicable): Mississippi River Basin

Lead State: MO

Total Funding Request: \$6,097,561.00

This project aims to help livestock farmers in Missouri build resiliency to weather extremes through implementation of carefully planned capital improvements that help them to get through drought and flood events with minimal impact to their operations. The Increasing On-Farm Resilience project will also help to mitigate future climate related effects through climate smart conservation practice implementation. Traditional approaches to implement best management practices on agricultural land have focused on meeting conservation objectives such as reducing soil erosion or improving water quality in order to improve the sustainability of agriculture. This project is focused on improving the sustainability of agriculture by implementing best management practices that help livestock operations become more resilient against the impacts of droughts and floods.

Upper Pearl River At-Risk Species and Source Water Protection Project, Phase III

Lead Partner: Wildlife Mississippi

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: MS

Total Funding Request: \$25,000,000.00

The Upper Pearl River At-Risk Species and Source Water Protection Project Phase III will protect 10,500 acres through U.S.-held, high restrictive perpetual easement on private land, 1,200 acres of a 10-year rental agreement on tribal land of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, and 5,000 acres of entity held easements utilizing non-USDA funds, and 500 acres of Longleaf Pine and bottomland hardwood restoration. Through this project, Wildlife Mississippi will prevent future land-use conversions that would eliminate habitats for native wildlife and worsen water quality in the river for maintaining populations of two at-risk aquatic turtles and up to 11 other species considered Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the state. The project area includes the last remaining portion of unprotected, privately owned land upstream of Mississippi's largest source of surface water used for drinking and protected lands to the north and its main tributaries. The reservoir supplies drinking water to more than 200,000 homes and businesses of the majority-African American city of Jackson.

Stewarding the Working Wild in MT, OR, and CO: Non-lethal Predator Risk Management on Agriculture Operations

Lead Partner: Heart of the Rockies Initiative

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: MT

Total Funding Request: \$16,664,634.00

The Stewarding the Working Wild project will help producers address some of the many threats they currently face, including drought, soil degradation, invasive species, wildlife displacement, conversion pressure, and commodity market fluctuations. The Heart of the Rockies Initiative, and other contributing partners will provide a holistic approach to incentivize producers to implement solutions that benefit land, livestock, and wildlife. This project will support the biologically diverse working lands that produce food and fiber, sustaining both rural and urban communities; enhance ecosystem services including clean water, biodiversity, and carbon storage; and maintain connected lands that provide essential habitat and migratory corridors.

Blackfeet Irrigation Improvement

Lead Partner: Blackfeet Tribe of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: MT

Total Funding Request: \$15,350,610.00

The Blackfeet Tribe and project partners will provide sprinkler irrigation as on farm/ranch improvements to address conservation priorities as established by the Blackfeet Agricultural Resource Management Plan. These conservation activities will be located on both Tribal and Bureau of Indian Affairs) irrigation projects and along rivers and streams in all six of the Blackfeet Nations watersheds. This allows the Blackfeet Water Department to put water rights onto the land and improve tribal farms and ranches in the process. It also provides tribal producers with the opportunity to improve their forage production for their livestock operations.

Bitterroot Partnership for Forest Conservation, Resilience, and Connectivity

Lead Partner: Bitter Root Land Trust

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: MT

Total Funding Request: \$10,370,366.00

The Bitterroot Partnership for Forest Conservation, Resilience, and Connectivity project goal is to connect, conserve, and steward private forest lands in the Bitterroot Valley, Montana. Through this RCPP, we will address forest health challenges the valley is facing and keep landscapes connected and resilient for the benefit of biodiversity, wildlife habitat, and safety of the local communities. Bitter Root Land Trust, NRCS, and other local partners will be collaborating with private landowners to conserve and steward forests in Ravalli County.

Lake Mattamuskeet to Pamlico Sound Water Quality and Resilience Improvement Project

Lead Partner: North Carolina Coastal Federation

Project Type: AFA

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: NC

Total Funding Request: \$16,866,666.00

The North Carolina Coastal Federation will use a collaboration of funds to implement an array of conservation practices across the Lake Mattamuskeet watershed. The Lake Mattamuskeet to Pamlico Sound Water Quality and Resilience Improvement project will enhance the water quality of both the lake and the surrounding estuary.

Triangle Working Lands Initiative

Lead Partner: Triangle Land Conservancy

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: NC

Total Funding Request: \$6,131,707.00

Triangle Land Conservancy (TLC)'s work is motivated by the shared vision of an increasingly healthy and vibrant Triangle region of North Carolina, where wild and working lands are protected, and everyone has access to open space, clean water, and local food. Farmland in North Carolina faces a high threat of conversion to other uses and development. The Triangle Working Lands Initiative will protect an additional 3,000 acres of farmland by 2025, with a goal of benefiting the entire Triangle community by prioritizing support for local farms and farmers as part of our conservation work. However, there are benefits of this conservation work that, up to now, have been predominately shared with certain members of our community.

North Dakota and Minnesota Supply Chain Soil Health Partnership

Lead Partner: Red River Basin Commission

Project Type: AFA

Funding Pool: CCA

CCA (if Applicable): Prairie Grasslands Region

Lead State: ND

Total Funding Request: \$20,000,000.00

The North Dakota/Minnesota Supply Chain Soil Health Partnership project will work with producers to increase adoption of climate-smart and soil health practices and systems in the northern Great Plains. Adoption of climate-smart ag/soil health practices, particularly no-till and cover crops, has generally lagged in the northern Great Plains when compared to other growing regions such as the Southeast and

Midwest. The short growing season in the northern Great Plains can complicate adoption of cover crops. The partnership in this project recognizes the importance of including Historically Underserved producers in the project and intends to work with CCAs to ensure that outreach and education is carried out to their client producers who qualify as HU. As part of its ongoing programming, the Trusted Advisor Partnership will continue engagement with Tribes to explore how Tribal producers and communities could benefit from these activities.

Enabling, for the Farmer, Real-time Advanced Irrigation Water Management through Twin Platte Natural Resources District's Water Data Program

Lead Partner: Twin Platte Natural Resources District

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: CCA

CCA (if Applicable): Prairie Grasslands Region

Lead State: NE

Total Funding Request: \$5,752,427.00

The Enabling Real Time Advanced Irrigation Water Management in Twin Platte Natural Resources District will implement advanced irrigation water management to ensure sustainability of the District's water resources in the near and long term while also providing ecosystem benefits, reducing carbon dioxide emissions, and enabling financial savings for farmers. To accomplish this project goal, the district will implement three objectives: (1) actively recruit farmers to further engage in the District's existing Water Data Program by placing devices capable of sensing real-time, field-level evapotranspiration (ET), precipitation, soil moisture, and other parameters in their fields; (2) incorporate these new data into the existing Water Data Program to provide farmers with real-time, field-level data to inform advanced irrigation water management (NRCS standard practice 449); and (3) track and report the environmental and economic impacts of the updated Water Data Program throughout the District and beyond, to encourage farmers and water managers - even beyond the District's borders - to incorporate innovative technologies both for environmental benefit and to reduce farmers' input costs.

Improving Grassland Health and Connecting Resilient Lands in 6 Great Plains States

Lead Partner: The Nature Conservancy

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: NE

Total Funding Request: \$4,229,049.00

The Nature Conservancy will engage with private landowners to protect and enhance native grasslands through adoption of private land incentive-based management practices designed to improve the ecological, economic, and social health of the land and its caretakers. The primary goal of the Improving Grassland Health and Connecting Resilient Lands project is to facilitate the adoption of conservation practices by landowners on 300,000 acres of priority grasslands within the Great Plains. The priority areas are the NE Sandhills, the Grand River Grasslands and Osage Plains within Missouri and parts of Iowa.

Mine Brook Gorge Twin Dam Removals and Floodplain Restoration Project

Lead Partner: Musconetcong Watershed Association

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: NJ

Total Funding Request: \$2,411,860.00

The overall goal of the Mine Brook Gorge Twin Dam Removals and Floodplain Restoration project is to provide restored stream functions and values to the Mine Brook Tributary by removing two dam structures, restoring connection of 1.75 miles of stream, about 1900 linear feet of stream channel, and the floodplain and riparian zone within approximately 7 acres of impounded area. The desired outcome of this project is to restore habitat refugia to native Coldwater fishes, reduce stream temperatures, and enhance biodiversity in the Mine Brook Tributary and Gorge.

Grazing Management and Non-Lethal Predator Risk Mitigation in NM and AZ

Lead Partner: Western Landowners Alliance

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: NM

Total Funding Request: \$6,665,854.00

The Working Wild is defined by partners as landscapes in the West that provide a suite of ecosystem services, with an emphasis on food and fiber production and

connected habitat for predators and native ungulates. The Western Landowners Alliance and partners have been collaborating to develop frameworks to support conservation planning on western ranches operating in large predator habitat. Partners are now poised to incorporate the lessons learned to facilitate technical and financial assistance delivery to communities in New Mexico and Arizona using land management authorities under RCPP, complementary with other federal and state resources. The goal of the project is to reduce the financial and social burden of recovering predator populations on livestock operations by increasing access to conservation activities relevant to rangeland livestock production.

Managing Native Vegetation for Climate Mitigation through Grassland Bird Conservation in Missouri and Ohio

Lead Partner: National Bobwhite and Grassland Initiative Foundation, Inc

Project Type: AFA

Funding Pool: CCA

CCA (if Applicable): Mississippi River Basin

Lead State: OH

Total Funding Request: \$25,000,000.00

The Managing Native Vegetation for Climate Mitigation project will use NRCS Climate Smart practices to rebuild production edges, forage bases, idle areas, and open spaces that have reverted to trees in MO and OH. In doing so, the National Bobwhite and Grassland Initiative Foundation will help producers address multiple natural resource concerns including carbon sequestration, wildlife habitat, water quality, and soil health.

Restoring, Protecting, and Supporting Tribal Connection to Native Oak Habitat

Lead Partner: Oregon Agricultural Trust

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: CCA

CCA (if Applicable): Western Waters

Lead State: OR

Total Funding Request: \$9,232,000.00

Oregon's biodiverse oak savannas and woodlands hold immense ecocultural value.

This project's three interrelated goals are to 1) restore native oak habitat by reintroducing traditional disturbance regimes, 2) permanently protect private agricultural lands with associated oak habitats from development and fragmentation

and 3) facilitate access to restored and protected properties for Native people for harvest, cultural purposes and stewardship. The Oregon Agriculture Trust's priority area for this project are Oregon's Lane and Linn Counties in the Upper Willamette Valley.

Oregon Dairy Climate and Water Quality Partnership

Lead Partner: Tillamook County Creamery Association

Project Type: AFA

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: OR

Total Funding Request: \$4,000,000.00

The Oregon Dairy Climate and Water Quality Partnership project will assist dairy producers in Clatsop and Tillamook, OR counties interested in adopting NRCS conservation practices focused on manure management. By enrolling 22+ producers representing a target of 10,000 cows this project will result in lasting improvements to water quality of impaired watersheds by tracking reductions of bacterial loads caused from livestock and field runoff. This will also result in reduced methane emissions by approximately 5,000 tons of carbon dioxide equivalents.

Mid-Atlantic Dairy Farmers Producing Tangible Results Through Climate Smart Solutions

Lead Partner: Maryland & Virginia Milk Producers Cooperative Association

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: PA

Total Funding Request: \$10,000,000.00

The goal and objectives of the Mid-Atlantic Dairy Farmers Producing Tangible Results Through Climate Smart Solutions project are to increase outreach and education about conservation practices and their benefits to dairy farmers in Maryland, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. These benefits include improved water quality, greenhouse gas reduction, improved soil health, and increase farm efficiency.

Upper Saluda Stream Restoration and Source Water Protection Program

Lead Partner: Resource Institute, Inc.

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: SC

Total Funding Request: \$3,109,756.00

The Upper Saluda Stream Restoration and Source Water Protection Program project will stabilize severely eroding and unstable streams and rivers in the Upper Saluda Watershed that flow into Saluda Lake, the drinking water source for Easley and surrounding communities. The project, managed by the Resource Institute, will also encourage the planning and implementation of upland conservation practices that will reduce sediment loss from adjacent farm fields by installing soil retention practices such as conservation tillage, residue management, rotational grazing, grassed waterways, and filter strips. Together, these activities will minimize total sediment deposition into streams, improve sediment transport, and reduce stored sediment in stream corridors.

South Dakota Grasslands Initiative

Lead Partner: Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

Project Type: AFA

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: SD

Total Funding Request: \$25,000,000.00

Through land rental and management contracts with producers the South Dakota Grasslands Initiative will aid in the transition from cropland to grassland. Ducks Unlimited and other project partners expect to restore 25,000 acres of grassland over five years in South Dakota. These activities will support the increase of soil carbon, reduce nitrogen loss, and sequester atmospheric carbon. The project will integrate spatial data with scientific modeling to translate acres of grassland restored into environmental outcomes such as carbon sequestered, flood water storage, increased migratory waterfowl biodiversity, reduced soil erosion and nitrogen and phosphorus runoff.

Conservation Easements in the Northern Great Plains of South Dakota

Lead Partner: South Dakota Agricultural Land Trust

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: SD

Total Funding Request: \$18,292,683.00

The South Dakota Agricultural Land Trust will support the perpetual protection of 8,000 acres of working ranches around the periphery of the Black Hills of South Dakota with minimally restrictive conservation easements. The predominately native grasslands of these protected properties will contribute tangible deliverables to NRCS climate-smart mitigation goals related to soil carbon sequestration while retaining these ranches as working lands.

Agropur Dairy Producers Best Management Practices Project

Lead Partner: Agropur

Project Type: AFA

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: SD

Total Funding Request: \$9,822,026.00

The Agropur Dairy Producers Best Management Practices project will incentivize the implementation of Best Management Practices at farms across the central US. In addition to delivering greenhouse gas emissions reductions, these strategies provide environmental benefits, including air quality improvements, soil protection, water protection, and resource conservation. Funding from RCPP, alongside funds from Agropur and Nestlé, will provide financial incentives and technical assistance to farmers, including Historically Underserved producers. This project will also provide data and evaluation support from our partners SEC and Athian, who will track and report environmental outcome data to provide project validation.

Making Sure Every Acre Counts

Lead Partner: South Dakota State University

Project Type: AFA

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: SD

Total Funding Request: \$8,000,000.00

South Dakota State University will use land rental and management contracts to install cover crops on marginal portions of cropland operations and uncovered

associated land to improve farm profitability, soil health, habitat diversity and ecosystem benefits. The Making Sure Every Acre Counts project will use before and after marginal land conversion on-farm data entered in Comet Planner/USDA Colorado State University. Over time this will lead to better soil quality as perennials naturally push salt further down into the soil profile.

West Tennessee Field and Forest Partnership: Advancing Conservation Alongside Economic Development

Lead Partner: Agricenter International, Inc.

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: TN

Total Funding Request: \$15,901,022.00

The West Tennessee Field and Forest Partnership project will alleviate the impacts of projected urbanization and land use change in West Tennessee on soil, water, and wildlife habitat resource concerns, It will also contribute to climate change mitigation through climate-smart agriculture and forestry practices that improve soil carbon, reduce nitrogen losses, and sequester carbon dioxide. The Agricenter International Inc will pilot a model to improve equitable participation of Justice40 disadvantaged communities, urban areas, and historically underserved producers and landowners in conservation.

Coastal Prairie Additive Conservation Partnership (CPACP)

Lead Partner: Texas Agricultural Land Trust

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: TX

Total Funding Request: \$25,000,000.00

Once covering approximately 656,000 acres, these remaining prairies totaling over 100,000 acres scattered among Goliad, Calhoun, Refugio, Victoria, Jackson and Aransas Counties represent Texas' largest remnants of coastal tallgrass prairie. The Coastal Prairie Additive Conservation Partnership (CPACP) aims to safeguard the natural resources of these prairies through conservation easements, short-term rental agreements, and comprehensive conservation plans that incorporate

scientifically proven conservation practices and regenerative/climate-smart agricultural principles. Texas Agricultural Land Trust estimates the impact of these activities will result in the conservation of approximately 82 billion gallons of water annually.

Texas Grasslands and Savannas Initiative

Lead Partner: Coastal Prairie Conservancy

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: TX

Total Funding Request: \$25,000,000.00

The Texas Grasslands & Savannas Initiative will engage with producers seeking resources to permanently protect lands and improve soil health, leading to enhanced carbon sequestration and increased carbon stock as well as long-term protection of land under threat of conversion. Grasslands and savannas are rich ecosystems, serving as home for a quarter of the world's population and habitat for diverse wildlife. They also offer critical benefits for people and nature by storing carbon, supporting producers, and providing recreational and quality of life benefits.

Hill Country Headwaters Conservation Initiative

Lead Partner: Hill Country Conservancy

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: CCA

CCA (if Applicable): Prairie Grasslands Region

Lead State: TX

Total Funding Request: \$23,242,213.00

Hill Country Conservancy and its partners will address climate change and flood mitigation using RCPP funding for easements on agricultural lands to prevent conversion to non-agricultural uses and impervious surfaces. \$25M in RCPP funding will be amplified by State, County and local funding allocated for easements, and landowner contributions of value. Parcels selected will be based on ability to achieve maximum conservation benefits, using criteria related to regional flood planning, karst recharge, terrestrial habitat, carbon sequestration potential and climate resilience, while promoting climate-smart ag and support of HU producers. The project area includes portions of the Colorado, Guadalupe, Lampasas and San Gabriel

River basins which lie within RCPP's Prairie Grasslands critical conservation area.

Kamas Meadows Initiative

Lead Partner: Summit Land Conservancy

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: UT

Total Funding Request: \$22,451,221.00

The Kamas Meadows Initiative project aims protect vital wetlands, agricultural land, and soils of statewide importance that make the Kamas Meadows unique. This project has three objectives, to preserve and protect agricultural and environmental resources through conservation easements, to improve the Kamas Meadows' resistance to climate change by preserving soils with high carbon sequestration, and to protect and maintain water quality and water flow through the Weber River basin, a major tributary to the Great Salt Lake and supplier of much of northern Utah's drinking water.

Climate Smart Switchgrass Cropping System Transition

Lead Partner: FDC Enterprises, Inc.

Project Type: AFA

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: VA

Total Funding Request: \$6,927,202.00

to the Climate Smart Switchgrass Cropping System Transition will improve carbon sequestration, soil health, and reduce nutrient runoff, and farm income in southern Virginia by transitioning 5,000 acres of marginal row crop agriculture, expiring Conservation Reserve Program acres, and degraded cool season grass pastureland to a Climate Smart Switchgrass Cropping System. The project will engage historically underserved producers through network of partner organizations with a target of at least 51% HU producer enrollment of more than 2,500 acres.). Field level monitoring of soil carbon change and reduced nutrient runoff will be implemented to accurately measure Switchgrass planting and management outcomes.

Advancing Buy-Protect-Sell Projects in Virginia: Permanently Protecting Farmland and Helping a New Generation Access Affordable Farmland

Lead Partner: American Farmland Trust

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: VA

Total Funding Request: \$5,000,000.00

The American Farmland Trust, in partnership with NRCS will permanently protect farmland across Virginia while also creating opportunities for historically underserved (HU) farmers to access affordable farms. Using an innovative Buy-Protect-Sell (BPS) model, this project will protect up to 1,000 acres from conversion while charting a strategic path for agricultural conservation in the future.

Vermont Water Quality Collaborative Partnership

Lead Partner: State of Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: VT

Total Funding Request: \$10,731,707.00

The Vermont Water Quality Collaborative Partnership will focus on restoring or enhancing floodplain and riparian buffers. This project will address water quality, soil health, and forestry and habitats, by reducing nutrient impacts, improving soil health and retention, improving flood resilience, and increasing resilient terrestrial and in-stream habitat. The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, together with partners, will use unique partnerships and NRCS practices to target the most effective areas and practices for implementation and maximize co-benefits based on state assessments and local partner knowledge.

Vermont Dairy Farms Working for Water, Wildlife, Climate, Food and Farmers

Lead Partner: National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: CCA

CCA (if Applicable): Northeast Forests and Waters

Lead State: VT

Total Funding Request: \$10,000,000.00

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and Stonyfield Organic/Lactalis US Yogurt

(Stonyfield) are partnering to help organic and pasture-based dairy farms throughout Vermont accelerate adoption of conservation practices that reduce their water quality and climate footprints, while also bolstering their economic sustainability. The Vermont Dairy Farms Working for Water, Wildlife, Climate, Food and Farmers project will leverage Stonyfield's dairy supply chain to bring farmers to the table and facilitate shared learning among farmers expanding the reach of projects. This may include events on demonstration farms organized by Stonyfield staff and offered to all Stonyfield supply farms, with the potential to co-host larger public events with partners. The project will also build a small network of trained technical assistance providers who can advise dairy farmers on whole-farm conservation planning that integrates both climate-smart and water quality practices.

Odessa Groundwater Replacement Program EL 84.7 Landowner Extension Mainline

Lead Partner: Grant County Conservation District

Project Type: AFA

Funding Pool: CCA

CCA (if Applicable): Western Waters

Lead State: WA

Total Funding Request: \$19,666,600.00

This project will complete one of the nine lateral systems in the Odessa Groundwater Replacement Program located in Central Washington. The finished EL 84.7 lateral will replace groundwater irrigation with Columbia River surface water for a total of 7,138 acres currently relying on rapidly declining groundwater wells, thereby helping to prevent source water depletion. Drilling deeper wells or converting to dryland crops are economic risks and won't sequester as much carbon as irrigated production can through biomass accumulation. By reducing the extraction from deep groundwater wells, the aquifer can recharge naturally over time, maintaining its long-term viability. This benefits the local communities who rely on it for their drinking water supply by ensuring a stable and reliable water supply for future generations.

Upper Yakima River Water Supply and Fish Habitat Improvements

Lead Partner: Kittitas County Conservation District

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: CCA

CCA (if Applicable): Western Waters

Lead State: WA

Total Funding Request: \$17,804,878.00

The Upper Yakima River Water Supply and Fish Habitat Improvements project will address critical needs for integrated conservation and restoration of watersheds in the Upper Yakima River of Central Washington. This supports the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan, a 30-year water resiliency plan to protect and enhance fish and natural resources, improve water availability and reliability, establish more efficient water markets, manage the variability of water supplies, and prepare for the uncertainties of climate change through operational and structural changes throughout the watershed. The Kittitas County Conservation District will assist producers with on-farm and delivery irrigation practices and habitat practices to improve water use efficiency, water quality and fish habitat availability. This project will replace 6 irrigation diversion structures with fish friendly structures opening up 2 miles of habitat, install 3 acres of riparian habitat; realize over 1,000 acre/feet of annual water savings with 4 miles of

Absolute Enteric Methane Reductions in Washington State Dairies: A New Frontier on the Journey to Net Zero

Lead Partner: AGSPIRE INC.

Project Type: AFA

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: WA

Total Funding Request: \$16,500,000.00

Agspire Inc's Absolute Enteric Methane Reductions in Washington State Dairies project will help producers reduce and avoid greenhouse gas emissions. This project will generate a reduction of approximately 225,000 MTCO₂e from enteric methane production in the NDA milkshed – lowering the GHG impact in the region, while providing producers in the milkshed with approximately \$23 million in additional revenue from their use of 3-NOP. This reduction is equivalent to the carbon implications of taking 50,069 cars off the road, and it will come at no cost to production for the NDA milkshed, which produces over 9 million lbs. of milk annually and supplies over 1,900 jobs.

Odessa Groundwater Replacement Program EL 80.6 Landowner Extension Mainline

Lead Partner: Grant County Conservation District

Project Type: AFA

Funding Pool: CCA

CCA (if Applicable): Western Waters

Lead State: WA

Total Funding Request: \$13,100,000.00

This project is part of the Odessa Groundwater Replacement Program located in the heart of the Columbia River Basin in Central Washington, with the goal to replace groundwater irrigation with Columbia River surface water for 5,222 acres of high-value irrigated farmland currently relying on the rapidly declining Odessa Subarea Aquifer, thereby helping to prevent source water depletion. Once constructed, this project would deliver Columbia Basin Project water from the East Columbia Basin Irrigation District's canal to a total of 10 farms effectively removing 11 wells from pumping groundwater and conserving 15,888 acre-feet (5.1 billion gals) of water in the aquifer each year.

Odessa Groundwater Replacement Program EL 86.4 On-Farm Project

Lead Partner: Grant County Conservation District

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: CCA

CCA (if Applicable): Western Waters

Lead State: WA

Total Funding Request: \$7,200,000.00

This project is part of the Odessa Groundwater Replacement Program (OGWRP) located in the heart of the Columbia River Basin in Central Washington. The goal of the Grant County Conservation District's project is to replace groundwater irrigation with Columbia River surface water for 5,426 acres of high-value irrigated farmland currently relying on the rapidly declining Odessa Subarea Aquifer, thereby helping to prevent source water depletion. Without more reliable surface water, farmers will continue to be impacted by declining groundwater levels. The goal is to conserve as much of the remaining aquifer as possible for the 25 communities that rely on it for their drinking water supply. This project will build upon funding through the Washington State Legislature to build the EL 86.4 mainline, utilizing RCPP to complete on-farm infrastructure.

Accelerating Methane Emission Reductions in Wisconsin, Michigan, and Indiana Dairy Producers

Lead Partner: Newtrient LLC

Project Type: AFA

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: WI

Total Funding Request: \$9,000,000.00

- The Accelerating Methane Emissions Reductions project will help dairy farms in Wisconsin, Michigan, and Indiana reduce methane emissions through NRCS conservation practices focused on manure management and feed management. This project will leverage \$9M in RCPP funding with around \$4M in partner contributions to achieve a cumulative reduction of 90,000 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent over the term of the project.

Wisconsin Priority Watershed Protection

Lead Partner: Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: WI

Total Funding Request: \$8,833,105.00

Ducks Unlimited's Wisconsin Priority Watershed Protection project will restore and protect 800 acres of wetlands and associated upland areas, resulting in lasting improvements in water quality, carbon sequestration, and biodiversity. This project aims to improve native habitat availability by 20% and net greenhouse gas emission reductions through soil health improvements, including work in high organic material soils.

Improving Soil Health in Potato Supply Chains

Lead Partner: McCain Foods

Project Type: AFA

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: WI

Total Funding Request: \$6,934,496.00

McCain Foods, through the Improving Soil Health in Potato Supply Chains project will implement soil health and climate-SMART agriculture practices and systems to improve the resilience of potato-growing operations on more than 6,000 acres in

Wisconsin and Maine. Partner soil health experts will visit farms to develop soil health plans and conduct soil health testing. This project will work with participating producers to plan, design, and implement soil health management practices that meet grower goals and objectives. Project partners will use a combination of soil testing and greenhouse gas modeling to evaluate and report on the project's environmental outcomes.

Wyoming's Upper Colorado River Basin Water Efficiency and Conservation Projects

Lead Partner: Wyoming Water Development Commission

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: CCA

CCA (if Applicable): Colorado River Basin

Lead State: WY

Total Funding Request: \$25,000,000.00

The Colorado River Basin is experiencing unprecedented water supply deficits due to historic drought conditions brought on by climate change. The Wyoming's Upper Colorado River Basin Water Efficiency and Conservation projects will implement NRCS practices such as converting open canals to pipe, improving diversions, or lining conveyances on a wide scale in both basins will improve efficiency and provide drought resiliency through improved water-use efficiency, decreased system water losses, and improved water management. Collectively these activities will preserve the viability of the local economies, enhance watershed health, provide long-term durable system efficiency projects, create resilience to drought, and expand the efforts within the entire Colorado River Basin Critical Conservation Area to implement multi-year reductions in use or demand for water supplies.