



**Natural Resources Conservation Service - Wisconsin
Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative
Rush River II Watersheds (070400010301, 070400010302,
070400010303, 070400010502, 070400010507)
Plan of Operations**

The Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative (MRBI) is a Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) initiative to work with agricultural producers to implement voluntary conservation practices to improve water quality in high-priority watersheds while maintaining agricultural productivity. MRBI is designed to help individual agricultural producers take actions to reduce the runoff of sediment, nutrients, and pathogens into waterways where water quality is a critical concern. The goal is to implement conservation practices in focused watersheds in a concentrated area so that agriculture no longer contributes to the impairment of water bodies within these priority watersheds and ultimately reduce the impact of the hypoxic zone in the Gulf of Mexico.

Through MRBI, eligible producers may receive assistance through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) for installing on-farm conservation practices. Eligible land is determined by NRCS and is based on an identified resource concern. Eligible producers may apply for financial assistance for conservation practices that will address the identified resource concerns.

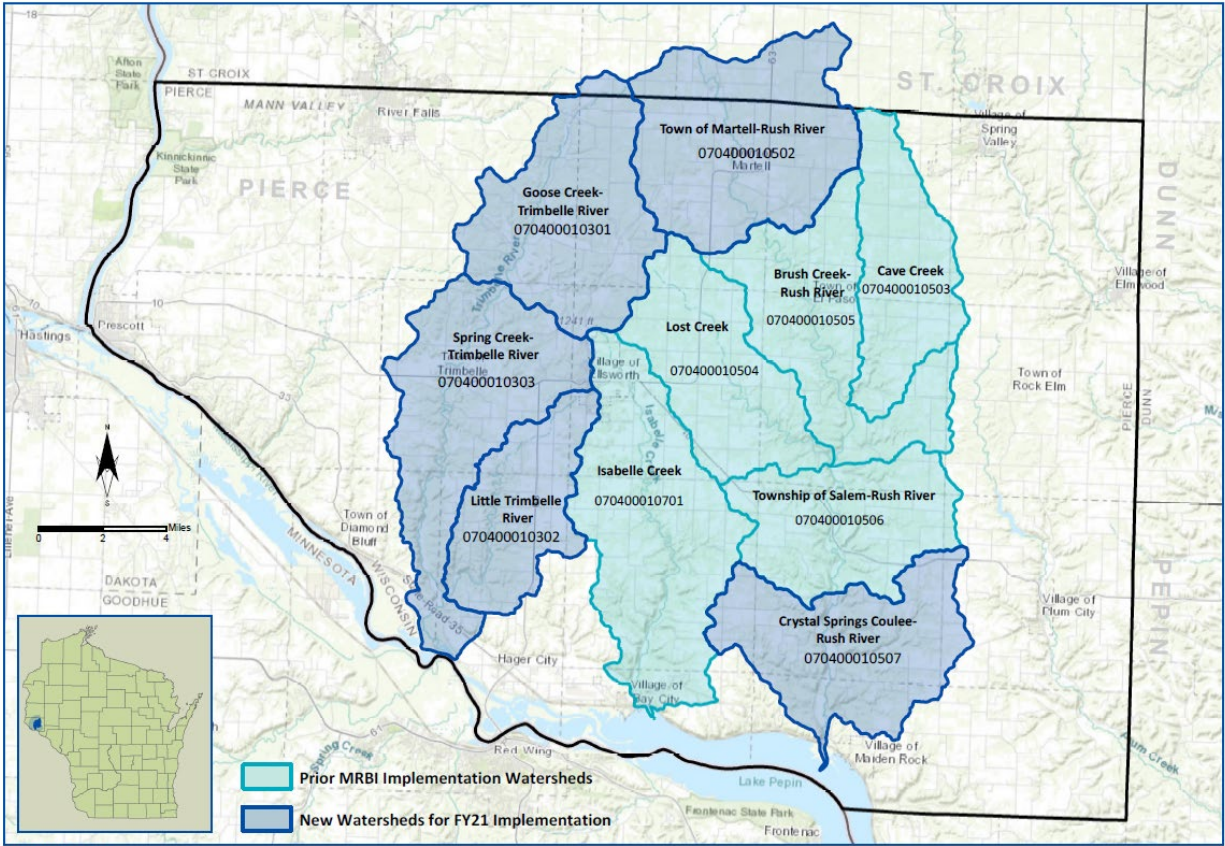
Eligible Watershed Area:

The eligible watershed areas for the initiative are five HUC12's in the Trimbelle and Rush River watersheds. The Watershed Boundary Dataset is the delineation used to identify the 12-digit hydrologic unit watershed boundary.

- Goose Creek (070400010301)
- Little Trimbelle River (070400010302)
- Spring Creek (070400010303)
- Town of Martell (070400010502)
- Crystal Springs Coulee (070400010507)

To be eligible for funding, 50% or more of the MRBI-EQIP application acreage must be located within the boundary of the watersheds.

Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative
 Prior and New Implementation Sub-watersheds



Dataset Sources:
 ESRI StreetMap World 2D
 NRCS 12 Digit WBD HUC

August 2018

Eligible Practices and Payment Rates:

See the documents posted on the [NRCS Wisconsin MRBI webpage](#) for the list of eligible conservation practices for the MRBI-EQIP sign-up. Practice payment rates are posted in the [NRCS Payment Schedule website](#). Applicants who certify they are a Beginning Farmer, Limited Resource Farmer or a Socially Disadvantaged Farmer are eligible to receive a higher practice payment rate.

Core conservation practices are critical to addressing the targeted resource concerns for MRBI and to achieve the desired environmental outcomes for the initiative. To be eligible for funding, an application must include at least one core conservation practice, or a supporting practice to improve the function of an existing, established core conservation practice; or the application must be for an eligible Conservation Planning Activity (CPA), Design and Implementation Activity (DIA) or Conservation and Evaluation Monitoring Activity (CEMA) offered through the MRBI sign-up.

Payment limits will be the same as those established for the Wisconsin EQIP General sign-up.

Application Period:

For fiscal year 2024, MRBI-EQIP applications will be administered with the ACT NOW process to allow maximum flexibilities for providing funding opportunities. Applications are accepted on a continuous basis, however, for MRBI-EQIP ACT NOW, applications will be accepted through May 17, 2024. The public announcement for the application period will be available on the NRCS-WI website. All eligible applications received by the application deadline will be evaluated and ranked for funding consideration.

Interested agricultural producers may apply in person, by telephone, fax, email, or letter at the Pierce County Service Center. The following is the contact information for the Pierce County Service Center:

Pierce County Service Center
412 W Kinne St
Ellsworth, WI 54011-0158

Contact: KaYing Vang, District
Conservationist Phone: (715) 273-5522
Fax: (855) 814-3110
Email: kaying.vang@usda.gov

Fund Pools:

The following fund pool has been established for the MRBI-EQIP sign-up:

MRBI – Rush River II

Producers applying for available financial assistance will be competing for funds within this fund pool.

Applications for Conservation Planning Activities (CPA) (i.e. Comprehensive Nutrient Management), Design and Implementation Activities (DIA) (i.e. Drainage Water Management DIA, Irrigation Water Management DIA, and Nutrient Management DIA), and Conservation Evaluation and Monitoring (CEMA) will be a single stand-alone application and will not be included in an application that contains non-CPA, DIA, or CEMA conservation practices.

A separate application form (i.e. NRCS-CPA-1200) does not need to be submitted if the applicant already has a deferred or current-year EQIP application.

Resource Concerns:

Addressing water quality degradation resource concerns in the Rush/Trimbelle River Watersheds via implementation of core conservation practices is the priority for the MRBI-EQIP sign-up and is reflected in the application ranking tool.

The eligible resource concern categories are:

- Aquatic habitat
- Concentrated erosion
- Field pesticide loss
- Field sediment, nutrient, and pathogen loss
- Soil quality limitations
- Storage and handling of pollutants
- Wind and water erosion

Land Use Types:

The following land use types are eligible for financial assistance through MRBI: Crop, Pasture, Farmstead, and Associated Ag Land.

Application Ranking:

The fund pool will not utilize a workload prioritization tool (screening). Scoring of all applications will be done according to the ranking established in the Conservation Assessment and Ranking Tool (CART).

Funding:

NRCS will allocate the available MRBI-EQIP funds based on the numerical ranking system in Conservation Assessment and Ranking Tool (CART). Through ACT NOW, NRCS can quickly fund a ranked application when it meets or exceeds the determined minimum ranking score of 30. Wisconsin NRCS will begin funding eligible applications after January 5, 2024 and make funding decisions every 2 weeks as funds are available. If there are insufficient funds available to fund an application, applications not selected for contracting will be deferred to the next EQIP application ranking period.