



Trout Unlimited: Driftless Area Habitat for the Wild and Rare – 2018 FB RCPP Project #2881 FY2024

Project Description/Summary:

The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) is a partnership that leverages capabilities and resources, targets assistance where it is most needed, cooperatively engages project partners, and works collaboratively with agriculture producers, forest land managers, and Tribes. This project will address aquatic and riparian habitat impairment and water quality impairment within the Driftless Area. The project is particularly focused on restoration of cold-water streams and seeks to pair instream habitat or aquatic organism passage with broader farm-scale conservation activities.

In a setting where cropland is adjacent to the stream, the highest-ranking projects will have an existing riparian easement (with DNR or a local entity) and will set-aside a 40' area from the top of bank to provide a stream buffer. Supporting practices could include the addition of a grassed waterway, field border, filter strip, contour buffer strips, water & sediment control basin, or riparian forest buffer to protect the integrity of the instream habitat and water quality.

This project also addresses broader-scale concentrated erosion, livestock production limitation, or degraded plant condition concerns for producers that use riparian floodplain areas for pasture. In order to be eligible for these practices, the producer must have a current grazing plan. Practices such as fencing, access control, pasture planting, or silvopasture that will improve water quality, instream baseflow, instream habitat and riparian habitat conditions may also be considered.

Project Area:

Projects with >50% of the project located within the Driftless Area Habitat for the Wild and Rare Phase 3 project area are eligible to participate in the project's sign-up. See map at the end of this document.

Eligible Land Management Producer Contract Land Uses:

Crop, Pasture, Forest, and Associated Ag Land

Eligible Resource Concern Categories:

Resource concern categories for this project include: Aquatic Habitat; Concentrated Erosion; Degraded Plant Condition; Field Pesticide Loss, Field Sediment, Nutrient and Pathogen Loss; Livestock production Limitation; Long term protection of land; Soil Quality Limitations; Terrestrial Habitat; Weather Resilience; Wind and Water Erosion



Eligible Land Management Practices:

The Schedule of Operations must include at least one of the core practices or must be completing a conservation system that supports core practices that are documented as already implemented on the land and identified in the CART assessment as historical or observed practices. Eligibility for Stream Habitat Improvement and Management (395) will be determined using the Wisconsin Stream Habitat Suitability Index (HSI).

Code	Practice Name	Core
395	Stream Habitat Improvement and Management	Core
396	Aquatic Organism Passage	Core
326	Clearing and Snagging	
327	Conservation Cover	
332	Contour Buffer Strips	
342	Critical Area Planting	
362	Diversion	
381	Silvopasture	
382	Fence	
386	Field Border	
391	Riparian Forest Buffer	
393	Filter Strip	
410	Grade Stabilization Structure	
412	Grassed Waterway	
420	Wildlife Habitat Planting	
468	Lined Waterway or Outlet	
472	Access Control	
484	Mulching	
490	Tree and Shrub Site Prep	
500	Obstruction Removal	
512	Pasture and Hayland Planting	
516	Livestock Pipeline	
528	Prescribed Grazing	
533	Pumping Plan	
560	Access Road	
561	Heavy Use Area Protection	
572	Spoil Disposal	
575	Trails and Walkways	
576	Livestock Shelter Structure	
578	Stream Crossing	
580	Streambank and Shoreline Protection	
582	Open Channel	
584	Channel Bed Stabilization	
587	Structure for Water Control	
606	Subsurface Drain	



612	Tree and Shrub Establishment
614	Watering Facility
620	Underground Outlet
638	Water and Sediment Control Basin
642	Water Well
649	Structure for Wildlife
656	Constructed Wetland
657	Wetland Restoration
658	Wetland Creation
659	Wetland Enhancement

Application Processing:

RCPP is a stand-alone program and requires its own NRCS-1200 application separate from other NRCS FA programs. All 2018 Farm Bill RCPP applications will be continuously accepted and signup cut off dates will be publicly announced each year. For Land Management and Rental producer contracts, question 2 of the NRCS-CPA-1200 Conservation Program Application (version October 2021) should be marked “Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)”. Write “2881 Trout Unlimited RCPP LMR” in box 2a (see NB 300-22-8). 2018 Farm Bill RCPP applications will be managed through Conservation Desktop. USDA Financial Assistance Eligibility will need to be determined manually with the Farm Service Agency’s Subsidiary Report.

2. Interested in participating in the following (select all that apply):

- Agricultural Conservation Easement Program-Wetland Reserve Easement (ACEP-WRE)
- Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA)
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

a) Program enrollment type, activity type, and/or project name, as applicable:

2881 Trout Unlimited RCPP LMR



Workload Prioritization:

For FY2024 this workload prioritization will be completed outside of conservation desktop. This document is the official Workload Prioritization Tool for planners to utilize. All High Priority applications will be ranked.

1. This project is located on WDNR Class 1,2, or 3 trout stream or designated as cold water or cool-cold per WDNR Surface Water Data Viewer's Surface Water-Streams Natural Communities layer.
 - Yes**, continue to question 2.
 - No (Low)** <end review>

2. The application includes 395 Stream Habitat Improvement and Management or 396 Aquatic Organism Passage or it includes both 395 and 396.
 - Yes**, continue to question 2A.
 - No (Low)** <end review>
 - 2A. Does this application include 580 Streambank and Shoreline protection?
 - Yes**, continue to question 2B.
 - No** continue to question 3.

 - 2B. This application includes a minimum of 5 instances of 395 Stream Habitat Improvement and Management per 1000ft of stream. Or a lesser amount of 395 is planned with Trout Unlimited Staff written concurrence.
 - Yes**, continue to question 3.
 - No, (LOW)** <end review>

3. Do planned grazing practices in this application impact 395 and/or 396.
 - Yes**, continue to question 3A.
 - No, (High, but grazing practices cannot be included the application)** <end review>
 - 3A. The applicant has an active grazing management plan that meets NRCS requirements.
 - Yes, (HIGH, grazing practices may be included in the application)** <end review>
 - No, (LOW)** <end review>



Partner Responsibilities:

Technical assistance may be delivered as a project contribution from Trout Unlimited. Trout Unlimited staff must complete a site visit to identify eligibility with 395 and 396 requirements and collect landowner priorities and resource concerns. Trout Unlimited or collaborating technical partners, Valley Stewardship Network, may complete pre-application, planning, design, installation, or checkout. All designs completed by Trout Unlimited (or their contractors) will meet the Field Office Technical Guide standards and specifications. Designs will be approved and signed off by NRCS staff with appropriate Job Approval Authority. Trout Unlimited will communicate with NRCS any further need for JAA-type oversight. The NEPA will be completed by the NRCS with inputs coming from the partner planner.

To discuss planning & design assistance with Trout Unlimited, please contact:

Entire WI Driftless:

Paul Krahn, 608-606-0565, paul.krahn@tu.org Sara Strassman, 608-668-1632, Sara.strassman@tu.org

Northern Driftless Counties (Buffalo, Dunn, Eau Claire, Pepin, Pierce, St. Croix, Trempealeau):

Peter Jonas, 608-323-2006, peter.jonas@tu.org

Crawford, La Crosse, Monroe, Vernon Counties:

Shelley Gradwell-Brenneman, 608-606-2568, shelly@valleystewardshipnetwork.org
Beth Summers, 608-637-3615, beth@valleystewardshipnetwork.org

Ranking:

Scoring of all applications will be done according to the ranking established in the Conservation Assessment and Ranking Tool (CART).

Survey: Applicability Questions

Section: Applicability - WI - 2881 RCPP v2024		
Question	Answer Choices	Points
Is this application in Wisconsin?	Yes	--
	Otherwise	--

Survey: Category Questions

Section: Category - WI - 2881 RCPP v2024		
Question	Answer Choices	Points
Greater than 50% of the application acres are located within the Trout Unlimited 2881 RCPP project area?	Yes	--
	Otherwise	--



Survey: Program Questions

Section: Program - WI - 2881 RCPP v2024		
Question	Answer Choices	Points
The applicant has worked with a conservation planner AND Trout Unlimited staff through the conservation process to the extent that:	all designs and job sheets for all practices included in the application are complete and final.	70
	at least 1 practice in the application has a design or job sheet that is complete and final.	10
	no designs or job sheets are complete and final.	0
The applicant marked on the NRCS-CPA-1200 that they are a Historically Underserved participant.	YES	40
	NO	0
Where is the participant's progress in obtaining permits to complete the project?	The project does not require permits.	50
	The project requires permits and the participant has all final permits in hand.	50
	The project requires permits and the participant has applied for all required permits.	40
	The project requires permits and the participant has not applied for all required permits.	0
Application addresses the following resource concerns (may choose more than 1):	Aquatic Habitat	15
	Field Sediment Nutrient and Pathogen Loss	15
	Terristrial Habitat	10
	None of the above	0

Survey: Resource Questions

Section: Resource - WI - 2881 - RCPP v2024		
Question	Answer Choices	Points
The project site is located on stream identified by the WI Department of Natural Resources as one of the following: (choose only one, if applicable):	Brook Trout Reserve Stream	50
	Class 2 trout stream	40
	Class 1 trout stream	30
	Otherwise (Cool-Cold, Coldwater from Streams Natural Communities layer)	20
A perpetual public easement is already established on the project site.	YES	50
	NO	0
Riparian area adjacent to stream is in perennial vegetation a minimum of 40 feet wide from the top of bank and has sufficient cover and management to address the project's eligible resource concerns, or, equivalent vegetation will be established through implementation of this application or associated conservation plan.	YES	58
	NO	0
Does application include one or more of the following instream or riparian habitat practices to benefit non-game species?	Stream Habitat Improvement and Management (395) for instream wood placement (root wad, log deflector, or basking log).	42
	Wetland Restoration (657)	35
	Structures for Wildlife (649)	25
	Pollinator planting/native seed mix (riparian)	20
	Not Applicable	0



RCPP Project Contacts:

RCPP Coordination:

RCPP Coordinator, Brandi Richter, brandi.richter@usda.gov

LMR Contract Coordinator, Jenn Chakravorty, jennifer.chakravorty@usda.gov

Lead Partners with Trout Unlimited:

Sara Strassman, (608) 668-1632, sara.strassman@tu.org

Approved Project Scope:

