



**Pennsylvania
State Office**

359 East Park Drive,
Suite 2
Harrisburg
Pennsylvania 17111

Ph: 717-237-2100

State Technical Committee (STC) Meeting

AGENDA

Wednesday, January 22, 2025

This meeting will be conducted both in-person at the PA NRCS state office and remotely via Microsoft Teams internet conferencing. The office address, meeting link and a call-in telephone number are provided at the end of this document.

- 1:00 pm** Welcome – Denise Coleman, NRCS State Conservationist
Moderator – Susan Parry, Assistant STC for Partnerships
- 1:10 pm** **Program Highlights/Presentations:**
USDA Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP)
Wildlife Report & Proposed Invasive Species Listing-
Beth Sassaman, PA NRCS State Biologist
- 1:40 pm** **Highlights from PA NRCS Annual Report**
Denise Coleman, State Conservationist
- 1:50 pm** **Technical Updates**
- Engineering – Tim Peters, State Engineer
 - Ecological Sciences – Dan Ludwig, State Resource Conservationist
 - Soils – Yuri Plowden, State Soil Scientist
- 2:00 pm** **Partnership and Easement Program Updates**
- Partnerships - Susan Parry, ASTC for Partnerships
 - Outreach Report- Abigail Appleman, State Outreach Coordinator
 - Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) – Melissa Hanner, Easement Program Manager
- 2:15 pm** **Financial Program Updates**
- Programs – Jared Shippey, ASTC for Programs
 - Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) – Ryan Cornelius, Program Manager

- Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) – Ashley Lenig, Program Manager
- Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)- Janette Leshner and Haley Dukes

2:35 pm Committee Input for Fiscal Year 2025

- Topic and/or Committee Suggestions?
- Open Forum for State Technical Committee members

***2025 Dates for State Technical Committee Meetings:**

Thursday, April 24, 2025

Tuesday, July 22, 2025

Wednesday, October 2025

January 22, 2025; Microsoft Teams meeting link:

Join on your computer, mobile app or room device.

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 267 044 151 901

Passcode: 2J7TRH

[Download Teams](#) | [Join on the web](#)

Or call in (audio only)

[+1 202-650-0123,657303009#](#) United States, Washington DC

Phone Conference ID: 657 303 009#

State Office Address and STC Webpage Link:

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/conservation-basics/conservation-state/pennsylvania/technical-committee>

STAC Handout Web Page Link:

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/conservation-basics/conservation-by-state/pennsylvania/pennsylvania-state-technical-committee-0>

Pennsylvania State Technical Committee Meeting

January 22, 2025

Denise Coleman, PA State Conservationist, NRCS, opened the meeting at 1pm and welcomed all participating online and those attending in person.

Beth Sassaman, State Wildlife Biologist, (See attached presentation handout.)

Beth Sassaman started her presentation by showing the group what the NRCS website looks like, pointing out its extensive content and encouraging everyone to explore it further, as time constraints prevented her from covering the entire site. She focused on wildlife assessments, emphasizing that NRCS is in a unique position to influence the recovery of declining species from a wildlife perspective through technical and financial assistance. The wildlife assessment provides scientific data and analysis on the impact of conservation activities. Beth first discussed the nationwide impact and potential of USDA's pollinator habitat enhancements. She highlighted that NRCS offers over 50 conservation practices that benefit pollinators and that prioritizing conservation efforts can improve outcomes for pollinators. She also spoke about golden-winged warbler density and occupancy, noting that while populations in the Great Lakes states are stable, they are declining in Pennsylvania and the Appalachians. Next, she discussed the cerulean warbler, a secondary species that NRCS supports through forest management. Studies have shown a positive impact of forest management practices, revealing that the effects of past unsustainable forestry practices were long-lasting. The study found that "if you build it, they will come," benefiting 22 non-focal bird species, including American redstarts and Baltimore orioles. For more information, visit the NRCS national website.



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Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP) Wildlife Assessments

FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION
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Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP)

- USDA's Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP) is a multi-agency effort led by the NRCS to quantify the effects of conservation practices across the nation's working lands.
 - Assessments for:
 - Cropland
 - Grazing Lands
 - Wetlands
 - Wildlife
 - Watersheds



Xerces Society

Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP)

- Through CEAP, USDA quantifies and reports on trends in conservation practices, and associated outcomes, over time. CEAP findings are used to guide conservation program development and support conservationists, agricultural producers, and partners in choosing the most effective conservation actions and making informed management decisions backed by data and science.





Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP)

[Home](#) > Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP)

USDA's Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP) is a multi-agency effort led by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to quantify the effects of conservation practices across the nation's working lands.

About the Conservation Effects Assessment Project

Through CEAP, USDA quantifies and reports on trends in conservation practices, and associated outcomes, over time. CEAP findings are used to guide conservation program development and support conservationists, agricultural producers, and partners in choosing the most effective conservation actions and making informed management decisions backed by data and science.

CEAP assessments are carried out at national, regional, and watershed scales for conservation efforts related to cropland, grazing land, wetlands, and wildlife.

Conservation Effects Assessment Project Assessments

CEAP provides assessments and associated conservation outcome insights for multiple land uses and conservation goals. These assessments empower a diversity of customers to evaluate conservation successes, identify potential improvements, and set targeted, measurable goals for the future.

You may access CEAP assessments for the following areas of focus. Click on each for additional information.

Cropland Assessments

Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP) cropland assessments quantify the effects of voluntary conservation efforts across the nation's cropland at both regional and national scales.

Grazing Land Assessments

Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP) grazing land assessments quantify the effects of voluntary conservation efforts across the nation's non-federal grazing land, including private pastureland and rangeland.

Wetland Assessments

Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP) wetland assessments quantify the effects of voluntary conservation efforts for wetlands located in agricultural settings at both regional and national scales.

Wildlife Assessments

Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP) wildlife assessments quantify the effects of voluntary conservation efforts on select fish and wildlife species across the nation's agricultural lands.

Watershed Assessments

Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP) watershed studies provide in-depth assessments of water quality, water availability, and soil concerns at a finer scale than national or regional assessments.



Evaluating the nationwide impact and potential of the USDA NRCS pollinator habitat enhancements...

- NRCS offers more than 50 conservation practices that benefit pollinators.
- Findings verify the effectiveness of these conservation practices in supporting pollinators.
- We can improve outcomes for pollinators by prioritizing conservation efforts.





Assessing Wildlife Response to NRCS Conservation Programs Targeting Eastern Deciduous Forests



- Golden-winged Warbler density and occupancy in managed communities in the Great Lakes and Central Appalachians
- Golden-winged Warbler post-fledging habitat selection and survival in Pennsylvania
- American Woodcock occupancy and density in early successional communities in the central Appalachians and western Great Lakes;
- Pollinator diversity and density within regenerating timber harvests on public and private lands in Pennsylvania



Assessing Wildlife Response to NRCS Conservation Programs Targeting Eastern Deciduous Forests



- Cerulean Warbler response to forest management on lands enrolled in RCPP in Pennsylvania and western Maryland
- Golden-winged and Cerulean Warbler as a pair of focal umbrella species
- Assessing the effectiveness of deer exclusion fencing to avian and plant communities in operational-scale regenerating timber harvests.



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Endangered Species Act Updates

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Monarch (*Danaus Plexippus*)

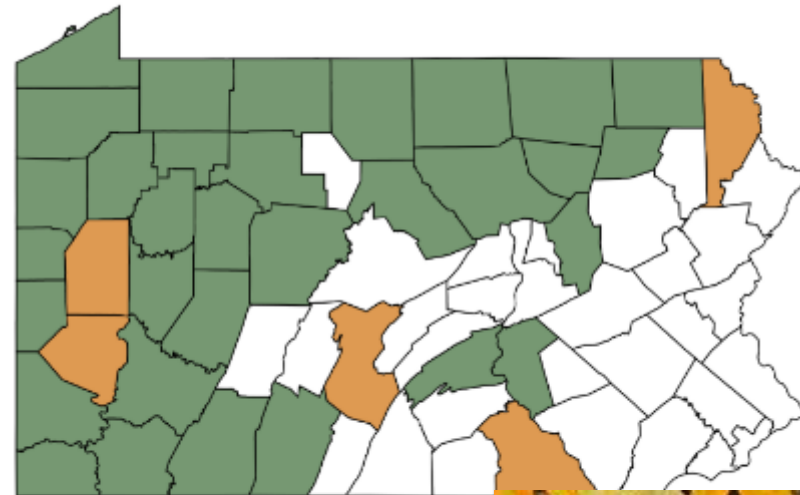
- Proposed Threatened under the Endangered Species Act on December 12, 2024.
- In North America, monarchs are grouped into two long-distance migratory populations. The eastern migratory population is the largest and overwinters in the mountains of central Mexico. The western migratory population primarily overwinters in coastal California.
- Since the 1980s, the eastern migratory population is estimated to have declined by approximately 80% while the western migratory population has declined by more than 95%.
- Threats to monarchs include loss and degradation of breeding, migratory and overwintering habitat; exposure to insecticides; and the effects of climate change.



Eastern Hellbender (*Cryptobranchus alleganiensis alleganiensis*)

- Proposed Endangered under the Endangered Species Act on December 12, 2024.
- Largest salamander in North America
- Pennsylvania's State Amphibian
- Habitat requirements include streams and rivers with strong flow high water quality as well as large substrate for nest rock locations.

Range:



● Verified During PARS (year >= 2013)
 ● Verified before PARS (year < 2013)

Data collected from paherpsurvey.org



Eastern Regal Fritillary (*Argynnis idalia idalia*)

- Proposed Endangered under the Endangered Species Act on August 5, 2024
- Limited to a single location at the Fort Indiantown Gap National Guard Installation in Annville, Pennsylvania
- Changes in temperature and moisture could impact bloom times and the overall productivity of native violet species, which the eastern regal fritillary's caterpillars need to survive.



Proposed Critical Habitat for Mussels

- Habitat for the rayed bean, sheepnose, snuffbox and spectaclecase mussels can be found in 17 states in the central and eastern United States
 - rayed bean, sheepnose and snuffbox mussels occur in Pennsylvania
- Proposal would designate a total of 3,974 river miles of occupied habitat.



Proposed Critical Habitat for Mussels

- Rayed Bean Mussel (*Villosa fabalis*)
 - (1) Critical habitat units are depicted for Armstrong, Butler, Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, McKean, Mercer, Venango, and Warren Counties
- Sheepnose (*Plethobasus cyphus*)
 - (1) Critical habitat units are depicted for Forest and Venango Counties
- Snuffbox Mussel (*Epioblasma triquetra*)
 - (1) Critical habitat units for the snuffbox mussel are depicted on the maps in this entry for Crawford, Erie, Lebanon, Mercer, and Venango Counties



Questions

Beth Sassaman
State Wildlife Biologist
359 East Park Drive, Suite 2
Harrisburg, PA 17110
p: (717) 237-2125 | c: (610) 213-5032
e: beth.sassaman@usda.gov



Denise Coleman, Pennsylvania State Conservationist, NRCS, (See attached presentation handout.) Denise Coleman presented the Pennsylvania NRCS accomplishments, starting with shoutouts to Jared Shippey, Melissa Hanner, Susan Parry, Dan Ludwig, and field office staff for their dedication. She announced that Pennsylvania received \$41 million in Inflation Reduction Act funding, of which \$33.3 million has been allocated, making Pennsylvania one of the few states to utilize this funding effectively for climate-smart practices. The state processed 444 contracts covering 128,000 acres, surpassing typical Farm Bill allocations. Denise noted the one-year extension for the Farm Bill, which maintains EQIP, CSP, and RCPP programs. She projected the \$33 million allocation to yield significant impacts by 2027. In 2024, targeted investments included the Organic Initiative, High Tunnel Initiative, Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, and the second year of the Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Initiative. Melissa Hanner finalized six easements for the Kittatinny Ridge in 2024. Unlike previous years, easement funding included ACEP, RCPP, and WRE. Denise also acknowledged the forestry team, including Yuri Plowden, Tim Peters, and Dan Ludwig, for their efforts in brush management, wildlife habitat improvements, and forest management plans. She thanked Mick Albert and Susan Parry for advancing easement stewardship and ensuring optimal use by managing invasive species.



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Pennsylvania NRCS Accomplishments

FY 2024

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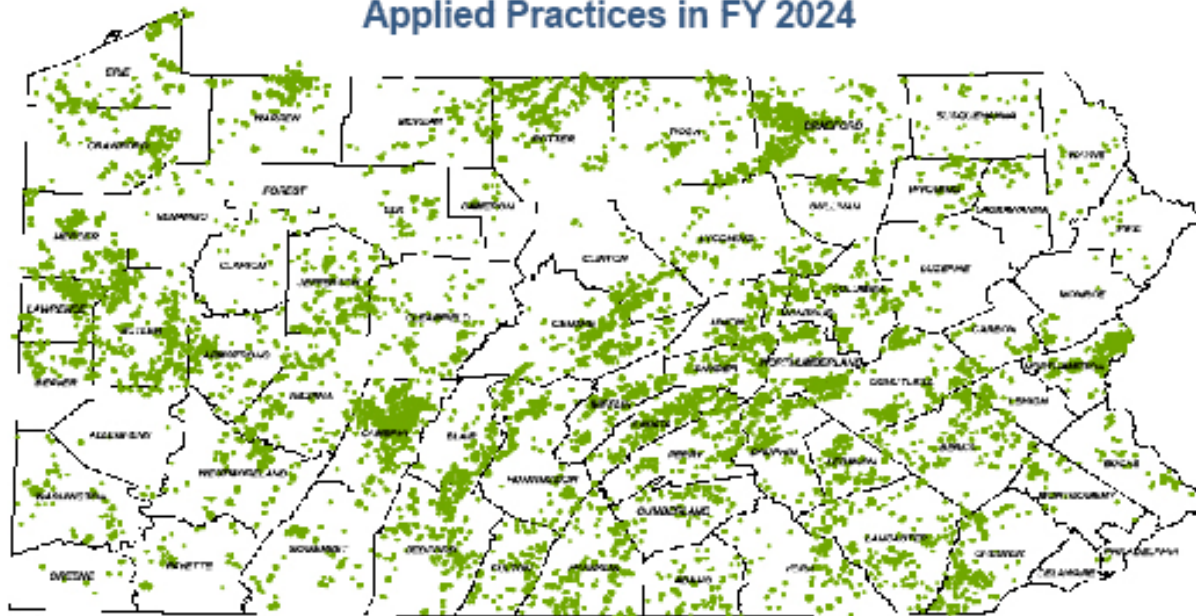
2024: A Year in Review

43,402



















CONSERVATION
PRACTICES APPLIED

In FY 2024, more than 43,000 conservation practices and enhancements were applied on Pennsylvania's private lands to help improve soil, air, and water quality; enhance wildlife habitat; and preserve land for future generations.

Applied Practices in FY 2024



FY 2024 Investments on Private Working Lands

EQIP Environmental Quality Incentives Program		AMA Agricultural Management Assistance Program	
	195,181		187
	787		29
	\$61.3 M		\$391,672
CSP Conservation Stewardship Program		RCPP Regional Conservation Partnership Program	
	69,807		6,452
	343		48
	\$11.9 M		\$10.7 M
* Includes CSP and CSP-GCI		* Includes RCPP-EQIP	
CTA Conservation Technical Assistance		Symbol Key	
	390,627	 Acres	 Funding
	1,712 *Acres planned	 Contracts	 Plans

FY 2024 Initiatives

**National Water Quality
Initiative (NWQI)**

\$2,809,924

Organic Initiative
(Certified & Transition)

\$309,678

High Tunnel Initiative

\$181,649

**Great Lakes Restoration
Initiative (GLRI)**

\$132,465

**Joint Chiefs Landscape
Restoration Partnership**

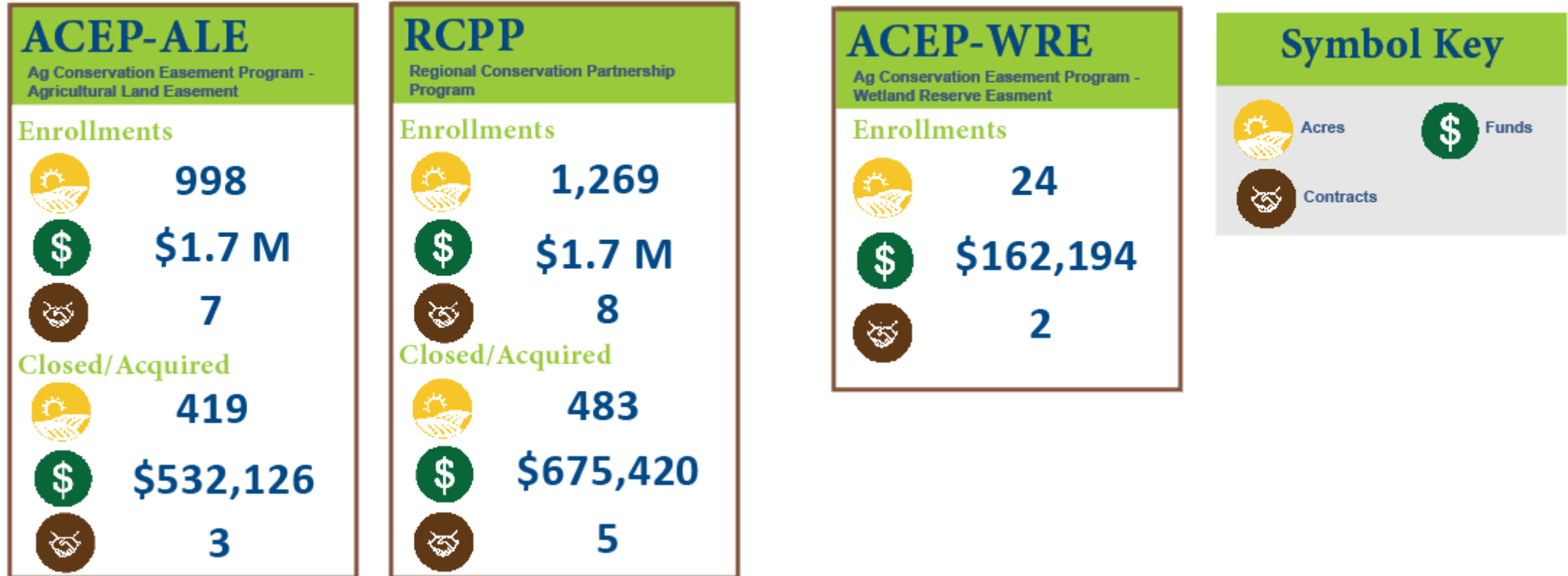
\$423,847

Top Conservation Practices Applied

Practice	Count	Measurement
Livestock		
Waste Storage	79	No
Heavy-Use Area	303,980	SF
Trails & Walkways	19,026	Ft
Stream Crossings	41	No
Fence	414,825	Ft
Roof Runoff	143	No
Prescribed Grazing	4,045	Ac

Agronomic		
No-till	36,685	Ac
Cover Crop	56,360	Ac
Nutrient Management	15,149	Ac
Soil Erosion		
Diversion	21,906	Ft
Waterway	57	Ac
Terrace	31,452	Ft
Lined Outlet	10,952	Ft
Buffers		
Herbaceous Buffer	3	Ac
Forest Buffer	76.4	Ac

Easements



Forestry

EQIP Forestry
Environmental Quality Incentives Program


4,186


39


\$1.8 M

Forest Management Plan Development
(Conservation Activity Plan)



7,031


70


\$200,703


Golden-Winged Warblers
Working Lands for Wildlife



866


18


\$758,491

CSP
Non-Industrial Private Forestland


26,913


177


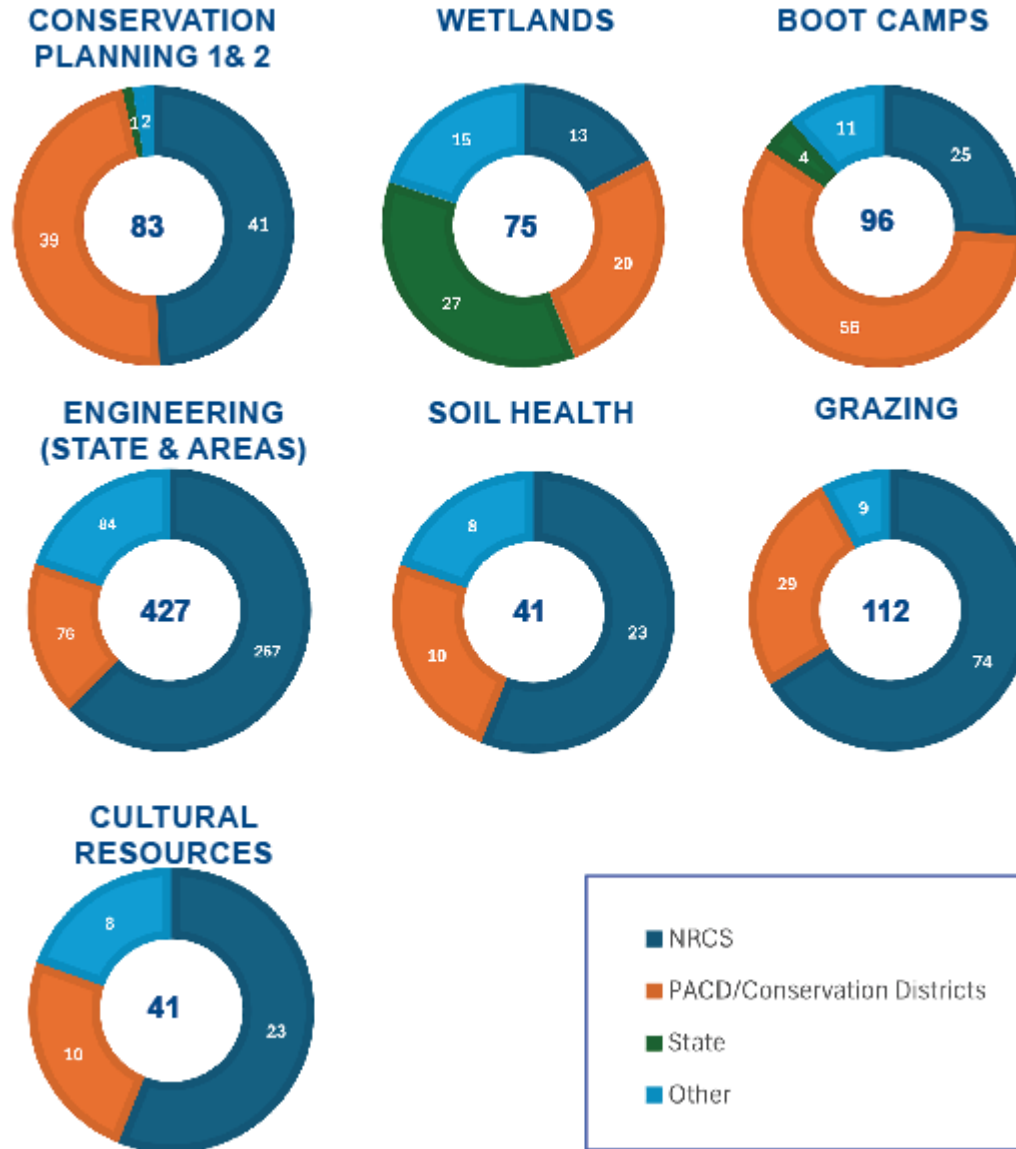

\$5 M

TABLE 2: FY 2024 TOP 5 CONSERVATION PRACTICES PLANNED ON FOREST LANDS

PRACTICE	ACRES/#
Brush Management (Ac)	270
Herbaceous Weed Treatment (Ac)	221
Brush Management to Improve Wildlife Habitat (Ac)	123
Forest Stand Improvement (Ac)	63
Forest Management Plan (No.)	70

Trainings

In FY 2024,
NRCS held
45 trainings



Tim Peters, Pennsylvania State Engineer, NRCS, (See attached presentation handout.) Tim Peters announced a compost bedded pack dairy facility workshop on February 27 at the Bloomsburg Technical Office, primarily for engineering staff, with a tour of the Zaginaylo system. (See attached presentation handout.) RSVPs should be sent to Tim Peters. He also discussed Boot Camp training sessions: Basic Boot Camp: March 21-27 in Lewisburg, with an additional session May 5-8 due to high demand. Level 2 Boot Camp: April 7-11 in Harrisburg. Tim provided an update on Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) efforts, which restore eroded streambanks and stabilize them. NRCS PA has visited over 100 sites, primarily in the NW and NE regions, and is finalizing projects from 2023 and April 2024 events.



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State Technical Committee Engineering Update 1/23/2025



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Composted Bedded Pack Dairy Facility Workshop

- February 27th @ the NRCS Bloomsburg Technical Office
- Targeting engineering staff
- Tour Zaginaylo system
- RSVP to Tim Peters





Boot Camp Trainings

- Basic: March 24-27
 - Looking at a second week (May 5-8)
- Level II April 7-11
- High registration numbers

EWP

- Wrapping up projects from 2023 event
 - Trough stream restrictions delayed construction until January
- 8 projects are starting construction from April 2024 event
- DSRs are completed for Debby 2024 storms
 - Visited well over 100 sites, mostly in NW and NE PA.

Dan Ludwig, State Resource Conservationist, NRCS, (See attached presentation handout.) Dan Ludwig announced the addition of Melissa Erdman as a new resource conservationist, starting January 27. He shared updates on conservation practice standards, noting that four have been posted on FOTOG, though a system bug prevents uploads of the new standards. For access, contact Mark Goodson, Brian Campbell, or Beth Sassaman. Five practice standards will be revised in 2025. Dan also announced the reactivation of STC subcommittees for nutrient management and forestry. Interested parties should contact him. He highlighted the success of the Conservation to Planning Training held November 19-21, 2024.


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Ecological Sciences Update


Dan Ludwig
State Resource Conservationist





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Eco Sciences Staffing

- Adding a Resource Conservationist
- Serve as a Liaison with the Center for Ag Conservation and Training (CACAT)
- Provide support and mentoring to PACD Agreement employees (6 statewide)
- Melissa Erdman- January 27, 2025

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2

Practice Standards

- New CPD-DMS system is up and running
- Conservation Practice Documents have been posted to FOTG
 - 612- Tree/Shrub Establishment
 - 655- Forest Trails and Landings
 - 396- Aquatic Organism Passage
 - 647- Early Succession Habitat Management
- Issues remain with posting new Interim Practice Standards
 - 805, 822, 827, 828

Practice Standards

- PA Practice Standards for FY25 Revision
- 327- Conservation Cover
- 340- Cover Crop
- 384- Woody Residue Treatment
- 422- Hedgerow Planting
- 657- Wetland Restoration

Interim Practice Standards

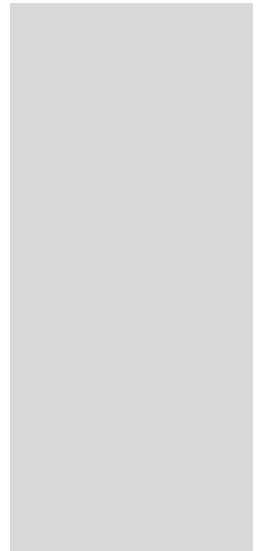
- PA is looking to adopt the following for FY2025:
- 805- Amending Soil Properties with Lime
- 822- Nonruminant Livestock Outdoor Management of Vegetative Cover
- 827- Strategic Harvested Forage Management
- 828- Wildlife Habitat Site Preparation

STAC Subcommittees

- Reactivation/Creation of 2 Subcommittees
- Nutrient Management
 - Review Cropland CEAP studies
 - Evaluate advanced nutrient management technologies
- Forestry
 - Invasive Species Treatment technology
 - Innovative practices (slash walls, etc.)

Training

- Introduction to Conservation Planning
 - Nov 19-21, 2024
 - 14 NRCS
 - 6 Conservation District
 - 4 Other



Yuri Plowden, State Soil Scientist, NRCS, (See attached presentation handout.) Yuri Plowden introduced the Soil Carbon Monitoring Network (SCMN), which aims to establish a baseline for soil carbon on working lands, estimate carbon sequestration, and promote best practices. Sampling in 2025 will include 1,500 sites nationwide, with 37 in Pennsylvania. The goal is to gather management data and resample the land in 5-10 years.



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Soil Carbon Monitoring Network

IRA-GHA Quantification – PA NRCS State Technical Committee

January 22, 2025

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Goal of the Soil Carbon Monitoring Network (SCMN)

- 10 To collect **field-based data** to assess and track trends related to **soil carbon** sequestration associated with conservation programs and management practices on **working lands** across the country.



IRA section 21002(a)(2) - Conservation Technical Assistance

- \$300,000,000 to carry out a program to quantify carbon sequestration and carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide emissions, through which the Natural Resources Conservation Service shall collect field-based data to assess the carbon sequestration and reduction in carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide emissions *outcomes* associated with activities carried out pursuant to this section and use the data to monitor and track those carbon sequestration and emissions *trends* through the Greenhouse Gas Inventory and Assessment Program of the Department of Agriculture.

Outcomes of the SCMN

- 10 Establish a baseline of soil carbon on farms and ranches to estimate carbon sequestration on working lands
- 10 Evaluate which management practices are most effective at increasing soil carbon sequestration
- 10 Encourage the adoption of best management practices for improving soil carbon
- 10 Advise policy for future Farm Bills and related legislation



Data Collected in the SCMN

- Soil Sampling
 - Soil Organic Carbon
 - Bulk Density
 - pH
 - Mid Infrared Spectroscopy
 - Particulate Organic Matter (POM)
- Vegetation and Biomass Sampling
- Management Information



Sampling has been accelerated for 2025

- Group effort to complete sampling of 1500 sites nationwide in FY2025
- Soil Plant Science Division taking the lead on the project
 - NRCS at the state level is tasked with finding field sites
 - PACD is assisting with finding field sites, sampling, and gathering management data
- **Goal is 37 sites** sampled in PA for FY2025

Information to be gathered

- Owner/operator access permission
- Management data:
 - cropping rotation,
 - fertility amendments,
 - pesticide management,
 - stocking rates,
 - conservation practices
 - other management info
- Permission to return in 5 to 10 years



Frequently Asked Questions

- What landuses are being sampled?
 - Cropland and pasture. Land area should be at least 10 acres, but SPSD will take what it can get.
- Are there financial incentives for landowners to participate?
 - Not at this time
- Are specific soils needed?
 - Emphasis is on fields with consistent and documented management history
- Do landowners need to sign an agreement to allow sampling again in 5 or 10 years?
 - No they do not have to sign an agreement

Frequently asked questions continued...

- Do actual NRCS practices need to be present?
 - No, proposed sites do not need to have NRCS conservation practices implemented at the time.
- How will the information be used?
 - All data will be aggregated across the region to determine potential trends. Data for an individual farm can be sent at farmer's request.

Questions?



**Contact: Yuri Plowden, NRCS
State Soil Scientist
yuri.plowden@usda.gov**



NRCS Toolkit: Resources for State Technical Committees from the Soil Science and Resource Assessment Deputy Area

Date and Version: January 2025, Version 1

Description: NRCS's Soil Science and Resource Assessment (SSRA) Deputy Area works with members of academia, researchers, and other science partners to deliver mission-critical resources that support science-based, data-driven conservation.

Along with NRCS staff, State Technical Committee members are a significant customer group for SSRA. We know navigating our many dashboards, online tools, reports, and other resources can be daunting. That's why we've created this toolkit!

Contents and How to Use: This toolkit provides details on SSRA resources of use for State Technical Committee members. We provide this in two formats:

- [Quick View: SSRA Resources by Topic](#) – Do you have a specific conservation or programmatic topic of focus? If yes, start with our Quick View! This section (p. 2-5) provides a brief overview of the resources we offer for a given focus area. You may use this to identify your resource(s) of interest before learning more in our All SSRA Resources section.
- [All SSRA Resources](#) – This section begins on p. 6 and provides more detail than the Quick View, including resource-specific information on geographic scope and access.

Important Note on Access: The All SSRA Resources section of this toolkit provides direct links to all of our resources and distinguishes each as publicly available or internal to NRCS. While State Technical Committee members cannot directly access internal resources, we provide SSRA points of contact for each who would be happy to provide overviews, deep dives, or custom support. SSRA staff are available to meet with you one-on-one or to join State Technical Committee meetings and present. While this option is available for all SSRA resources, we hope it will be especially useful in delivering insights from those that are only directly available to NRCS staff.

Toolkit Points of Contact: [Elizabeth Creech-Thomas](#), [Heather Emmons](#), and [Stephanie Pettit](#)

Guidance: This toolkit is intended to support all NRCS staff who engage with State Technical Committee members and those members directly. Please forward to the appropriate staff and committee members in your state.

SSRA is here to empower your data-driven decision making. While this is a first iteration, we will continue building upon this toolkit in the future. In the meantime, our door is always open for questions or ideas to strengthen our Deputy Area's support for you. Please contact us for direct assistance by emailing the point of contact included with each resource.

Quick View: SSRA Resources by Topic

Start here if you have a conservation or programmatic topic of interest. You may click the resource name to go directly to more information on that specific dashboard, online tool, or report in our All SSRA Resources section. There you will find additional details on use, geographic scope, and how to access each unique resource with SSRA contact information to provide direct support.

SSRA Resources by Conservation Topic

Air Quality

Resource Name	Resource Use
Climate-Smart Mitigation Analysis Dashboard	Identify opportunities to target climate-smart mitigation practices available in COMET-Planner.

Animals (Includes Livestock and Wildlife)

Resource Name	Resource Use
Environmental Quality Incentives Program Wildlife Dashboard	Access wildlife investments made via the Environmental Quality Incentives Program since fiscal year 2010 and changes in investments since the 2014 Farm Bill.
RCA Data Viewer	Graph, map, and download customized data based on practices applied through NRCS programs and survey data on land use, soil erosion, prime farmland, and non-Federal rangeland resource concerns from the National Resources Inventory.

Climate Change

Resource Name	Resource Use
Climate-Smart Mitigation Analysis Dashboard	Identify opportunities to target climate-smart mitigation practices available in COMET-Planner.
Land Use and Cover Inventory Database	Develop custom estimates of data available via the National Resources Inventory.
NRCS County Drought Report Dashboard	Access drought severity data and associated visualizations on the national, state, and county levels.
Rapid Carbon Assessment of Soil Organic Carbon Stocks	Access estimates of amounts and distribution of carbon stocks for U.S. soils under various land covers and differing agricultural management.
Snow and Water Products Guide	Access interactive maps, customizable reports, and a suite of charts related to snow survey and water supply forecasting in the West.

Equity, Justice, and Equal Opportunity

Resource Name	Resource Use
Equity in Program Delivery Dashboard	Assess equity of NRCS program delivery and identify opportunities for improvement.

Plants

Resource Name	Resource Use
PLANTS (Plant List of Attributes, Names, Taxonomy, and Symbols) Database	Access standardized information about the vascular plants, mosses, liverworts, hornworts, and lichens of the U.S. and territories.
RCA Data Viewer	Graph, map, and download customized data based on practices applied through NRCS programs and survey data on land use, soil erosion, prime farmland, and non-Federal rangeland resource concerns from the National Resources Inventory.

Soil Conservation and Soil Health

Resource Name	Resource Use
Climate-Smart Mitigation Analysis Dashboard	Identify opportunities to target climate-smart mitigation practices available in COMET-Planner.
Land Use and Cover Inventory Database	Develop custom estimates of data available via the National Resources Inventory.
RCA Data Viewer	Graph, map, and download customized data based on practices applied through NRCS programs and survey data on land use, soil erosion, prime farmland, and non-Federal rangeland resource concerns from the National Resources Inventory.
State Landscape Planning Package and Associated Resources	Access data on cropland conservation efforts focused on water quality at the field, watershed, or landscape scale.

Soil Science

Resource Name	Resource Use
Soil Education Resources	Access soil facts, lesson plans, 12 Orders of Soil Taxonomy, Soil Colors of the U.S., a soil texture calculator, education and outreach materials, and more.
SoilWeb Apps	Access detailed soil survey data from the National Cooperative Soil Survey for most of the U.S.
Web Soil Survey	Access soil maps and data available online for more than 95 percent of the nation's counties.

Water Quality and Quantity

Resource Name	Resource Use
NRCS County Drought Report Dashboard	Access drought severity data and associated visualizations on the national, state, and county levels.
Snow and Water Products Guide	Access interactive maps, customizable reports, and a suite of charts related to snow survey and water supply forecasting in the West.
State Landscape Planning Package and Associated Resources	Access data on cropland conservation efforts focused on water quality at the field, watershed, or landscape scale.
RCA Data Viewer	Graph, map, and download customized data based on practices applied through NRCS programs and survey data on land use, soil erosion, prime farmland, and non-Federal rangeland resource concerns from the National Resources Inventory.

Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production

Resource Name	Resource Use
Urban Agriculture Priority Data Dashboard	Access data to inform targeted conservation support for urban and peri-urban agricultural operations.

SSRA Resources for NRCS Conservation Programs Data

Resource Name	Resource Use
Easement Program Open Data Dashboards	Access data for NRCS's Agricultural Conservation Easement Program, Healthy Forests Reserve Program, and former NRCS easement programs such as the Grasslands Reserve Program.
Environmental Quality Incentives Program Wildlife Dashboard	Access wildlife investments made via the Environmental Quality Incentives Program since fiscal year 2010 and changes in investments since the 2014 Farm Bill.
Financial Assistance Program Open Data Dashboards	Access data for NRCS's Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Conservation Stewardship Program, Regional Conservation Partnership Program, and other working land financial assistance programs.
RCA Data Viewer	Graph, map, and download customized data based on practices applied through NRCS programs and survey data on land use, soil erosion, prime farmland, and non-Federal rangeland resource concerns from the National Resources Inventory.



All SSRA Resources

SSRA provides dashboards, online tools, reports, and other resources to support voluntary conservation efforts backed by data and science. These resources are listed alphabetically below, with details on each including a description, geographic scope, related focus area(s), access, and SSRA contact information for additional information or support.

Climate-Smart Mitigation Analysis Dashboard

Description: The Climate-Smart Mitigation Analysis Dashboard provides a gap analysis for identifying opportunities to prioritize climate-smart mitigation practices based on both the available land use base and historical conservation treatment. This dashboard includes practices from the [Fiscal Year 2025 Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry Mitigation Activities List](#).

Geographic Scope: 48 Contiguous U.S. States and Hawaii

Focus Areas: Air Quality, Climate Change, Soil Conservation and Soil Health

Access Status: NRCS Staff Only

Links: NRCS staff may access an overview of this dashboard via [National Bulletin 290-25-1](#). [A direct link to the Climate-Smart Mitigation Analysis Dashboard is available here](#).

SSRA Contact: Email SM.FPAC.USDA.OUTCOMES@USDA.GOV with questions about this dashboard or to request a demo from the NRCS Outcomes Team.

Easement Program Open Data Dashboards

Description: The Easement Program Open Data Dashboards offer an overview of NRCS's [Agricultural Conservation Easement Program \(ACEP\)](#), [Healthy Forests Reserve Program \(HFRP\)](#), and former NRCS easement programs such as the Grasslands Reserve Program (GRP). Users may view easement data for easement acquisitions – the time from program enrollment to easement creation – or easement restoration. The dashboards include data filterable by various categories, including easement count and acres, fiscal year, easement program, and geographic location. Additionally, users may view data by easement conservation purpose including agricultural, forest, floodplain, grasslands, or wetlands.

Geographic Scope: 50 U.S. States and Puerto Rico

Focus Area: NRCS Conservation Programs Data

Access Status: Public

Link: [The Easement Program Open Data Dashboards are available here on the farmers.gov website](#).

SSRA Contact: Email SM.FPAC.USDA.OUTCOMES@USDA.GOV with questions about this dashboard or to request a demo from the NRCS Outcomes Team.



Environmental Quality Incentives Program Wildlife Dashboard

Description: The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Wildlife Dashboard highlights national trends in wildlife investments made using [EQIP](#) since fiscal year 2010 and provides data on wildlife investments by national initiative and NRCS conservation practice. The dashboard provides users an overview of the portions of EQIP funds each state has dedicated towards wildlife, including a comparison of this share versus total EQIP funding. Users may also explore trends in wildlife investments over time, and how these investments have changed between the 2014 and 2018 Farm Bill periods.

Geographic Scope: Whole U.S. including 50 States, the Caribbean Area, and the Pacific Island Area

Focus Areas: Animals (Includes Wildlife), NRCS Conservation Programs Data

Access Status: NRCS Staff Only

Links: NRCS staff may access an overview of this dashboard via [an introductory page on the Integrated Landscape Planning Toolbox](#). [A direct link to the EQIP Wildlife Dashboard is available here.](#)

SSRA Contact: Email SM.FPAC.USDA.OUTCOMES@USDA.GOV with questions about this dashboard or to request a demo from the NRCS Outcomes Team.

Equity in Program Delivery Dashboard

Description: SSRA promotes the NRCS Equity Office's Equity in Program Delivery Dashboard alongside other priority dashboards we have developed to provide users with data on NRCS priorities. The Equity in Program Delivery Dashboard provides data on beginning farmer and rancher (BFR) and socially disadvantaged farmer and rancher (SDFR) producers by both geographic level and NRCS program. Additionally, users may view the proportion of obligations for BFR and SDFR producers and compare distribution of program delivery components against the customer baseline for a selected demographic group.

Geographic Scope: [Dependent on Focus](#)

Focus Area: Equity, Justice, and Equal Opportunity

Access Status: NRCS Staff Only

Links: NRCS staff may access an overview of this dashboard via [National Bulletin 290-25-1](#). [A direct link to the dashboard is available here.](#)

SSRA Contact: Email SM.FPAC.USDA.OUTCOMES@USDA.GOV with questions about the Equity in Program Delivery Dashboard or to request a dashboard demo from the NRCS Outcomes Team.



Financial Assistance Program Open Data Dashboards

Description: The Financial Assistance Program Open Data Dashboards provide data for NRCS's [Environmental Quality Incentives Program \(EQIP\)](#), [Conservation Stewardship Program \(CSP\)](#), [Regional Conservation Partnership Program \(RCPP\)](#), and other working land financial assistance programs. Dashboards include filters for programs, practice types, contract status, and various producer types. Users may view data by contract count, total treated acres, and dollars obligated.

Geographic Scope: Whole U.S. including 50 States, the Caribbean Area, and the Pacific Island Area

Focus Area: NRCS Conservation Programs Data

Access Status: Public

Link: [The Financial Assistance Program Open Data Dashboards are available here on the farmers.gov website.](#)

SSRA Contact: Email SM.FPAC.USDA.OUTCOMES@USDA.GOV with questions about this dashboard or to request a demo from the NRCS Outcomes Team.

Land Use and Cover Inventory Database

Description: The Land Use and Cover Inventory Database (LUCID) enables users to develop custom estimates of data available via USDA's [National Resources Inventory \(NRI\)](#). Specifically, LUCID includes condition and trend data on land cover and use, conservation practices, urbanization, irrigation, erosion, grazing lands, and wetlands for non-Federal lands of the U.S.

Geographic Scope: 49 U.S. States (Excludes Alaska) and Caribbean Area

Focus Areas: Climate Change, Soil Conservation and Soil Health

Access Status: Two Tool Versions – One Public, One NRCS Staff Only

Links: Additional details on the public-facing version of LUCID are [available on the NRCS NRI webpage](#). [A direct link to LUCID Public is available here](#). LUCID for NRCS offers the same data and functionality as LUCID Public with additional geographic granularity. [Additional details for NRCS staff are available via this introductory page](#), along with instructions to access LUCID for NRCS.

SSRA Contact: Email Lucas.Tcheuko@usda.gov, NRCS National Leader for NRI Customer Service, with questions about LUCID or to request a demo of either version of this tool.



NRCS County Drought Report Dashboard

Description: The NRCS County Drought Report Dashboard provides drought severity data and associated visualizations with data from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Drought Monitor. NRCS staff may use this dashboard to assess trends in drought at the national, state, and county levels from 2015 to present.

Geographic Scope: 50 U.S. States and Caribbean Area

Focus Areas: Climate Change, Water Quality and Quantity

Access Status: NRCS Staff Only

Links: NRCS staff may access an overview of this dashboard via [an introductory page on the Integrated Landscape Planning Toolbox](#). [A direct link to the NRCS County Drought Report Dashboard is available here](#).

SSRA Contact: Email [Peter Chen](#), NRCS Resource Analytics Lab Coordinator, with questions about this dashboard or to request a demo.

PLANTS (Plant List of Attributes, Names, Taxonomy, and Symbols) Database

Description: The PLANTS (Plant List of Attributes, Names, Taxonomy, and Symbols) Database provides standardized information about the vascular plants, mosses, liverworts, hornworts, and lichens of the U.S. and territories. It includes names, plant symbols, checklists, distributional data, species abstracts, characteristics, images, crop information, automated tools, onward web links, and references. This information primarily promotes land conservation in the United States and its territories. Academic, educational, and general use is encouraged.

Geographic Scope: Whole U.S. including 50 States, the Caribbean Area, and the Pacific Island Area

Focus Area: Plants

Access Status: Public

Link: You may [access the PLANTS Database via this webpage](#).

SSRA Contact: Email nrcs-nssc-soilshotline@usda.gov with questions about the PLANTS Database or to request additional information.



Rapid Carbon Assessment of Soil Organic Carbon Stocks

Description: The Rapid Carbon Assessment of Soil Organic Carbon Stocks (RaCA) was initiated to:

- Develop statistically reliable quantitative estimates of amounts and distribution of carbon stocks for U.S. soils under various land covers and, to the extent possible, differing agricultural management.
- Provide data to support model simulations of soil carbon change related to land use change, agricultural management, conservation practices, and climate change.
- Provide a scientifically and statistically defensible inventory of soil carbon stocks for the U.S.

Geographic Scope: 48 Contiguous U.S. States

Focus Area: Climate Change

Access Status: Public

Link: You may directly access all RaCA resources – including additional details on methodology, sampling, and data gathering documentation; data tables; maps, and an associated R file – [via this webpage](#).

SSRA Contact: Email nrcs-nssc-soilshotline@usda.gov with questions about RaCA or to request additional information.

RCA Data Viewer

Description: The [Resources Conservation Act \(RCA\)](#) Data Viewer includes data and associated dashboards on investments for Farm Bill and Inflation Reduction Act funding; NRCS programs and practices; and surveys on land use, soil erosion, prime farmland, and non-Federal rangeland resource concerns.

Geographic Scope: Dependent on Dashboard

Focus Areas: Animals (Includes Livestock and Wildlife), Plants, Soil Conservation and Soil Health, Water Quality and Quantity, NRCS Conservation Programs Data

Access Status: Public

Link: [All resources in the RCA Data Viewer are available here](#) on the NRCS website.

SSRA Contact: Email [Peter Chen](#), NRCS Resource Analytics Lab Coordinator, with questions about the RCA Data Viewer or to request a demo.



Snow and Water Products Guide

Description: NRCS hydrologists manage a comprehensive network of manually-measured snow courses and automated Snow Telemetry monitoring sites throughout the West and estimate the runoff that will occur when it melts. The Snow and Water Products Guide shares the resulting interactive maps, customizable reports, and a suite of charts related to snow survey and water supply forecasting for sites across the country.

Geographic Scope: 50 U.S. States and Caribbean Area

Focus Areas: Climate Change, Water Quality and Quantity

Access Status: Public, with Additional Resources for NRCS Staff Only

Links: The public Snow and Water Products Guide includes links to multiple maps, reports, and charts with associated resources and is [available via this webpage](#). Additional applications including preliminary resources are [available for NRCS staff only via this SharePoint page](#).

SSRA Contact: State-specific inquiries related to the Snow and Water Products Guide are best addressed by the state offices. Find information for your state's snow office on the [Snow Survey and Water Supply Forecasting Program](#) page. Contact [Stephanie Pettit](#) with general questions about NRCS support for snow survey and water supply forecasting.

Soil Education Resources

Description: The NRCS Soil Education webpage delivers soil facts, lesson plans, 12 Orders of Soil Taxonomy, Soil Colors of the U.S., a soil texture calculator, education and outreach materials, and more for a range of NRCS staff and customers.

Geographic Scope: Whole U.S. including 50 States, the Caribbean Area, and the Pacific Island Area

Focus Area: Soil Science

Access Status: Public

Link: Visit the [Soil Education webpage](#) to access this suite of resources.

SSRA Contact: Email nrcs-nssc-soilshotline@usda.gov with questions about Soil Education.



SoilWeb Apps

Description: SoilWeb Apps include multiple products that can be used to access detailed soil survey data from the National Cooperative Soil Survey for most of the U.S. This suite of products is hosted by the California Soil Resource Lab managed by the University of California, Davis.

Geographic Scope: Whole U.S. including 50 States, the Caribbean Area, and the Pacific Island Area

Focus Areas: Soil Science

Access Status: Public

Link: You may [access SoilWeb Apps via this University of California, Davis webpage](#).

SSRA Contact: Email nrcs-nssc-soilshotline@usda.gov with questions about SoilWeb Apps or to request additional information.

State Landscape Planning Package and Associated Resources

Description: The State Landscape Planning Package (SLPP) and associated resources support cropland conservation planning focused on water quality at the field, watershed, or landscape scales. This includes:

- The Conservation Effects Assessment Project Conservation Benefits Identifier (CCBI) Field-Level Web Application, which may be used to identify cropland fields most vulnerable to losses of sediment, crop nutrients, and/or pathogens.
- The SLPP Web Application, which supports landscape and hydrologic unit code (HUC)-12 watershed-scale planning on cropland through information such as soil vulnerability to sediment and nutrient loss and the status of past conservation treatment.

Geographic Scope: 50 U.S. States and Puerto Rico

Focus Areas: Soil Conservation and Soil Health, Water Quality and Quantity

Access Status: NRCS Staff Only

Links: NRCS staff may access an overview of these resources via [an introductory page on the Integrated Landscape Planning Toolbox](#). [A direct link to the CCBI Field-Level Web Application is available here](#). [The SLPP Web Application is linked here](#), with [SLPP data files available here](#).

SSRA Contact: Email SM.FPAC.USDA.OUTCOMES@USDA.GOV with questions about these resources or to request a demo from the NRCS Outcomes Team.



Urban Agriculture Priority Data Dashboard

Description: The Urban Agriculture Priority Data Dashboard provides data to deliver targeted conservation support for urban and peri-urban operations. Users may filter data by a range of variables such as urban census tracts, conservation practices in urban areas, and urban areas available for agricultural use. Data can be viewed by state within urbanized areas that cover multiple states.

Geographic Scope: Whole U.S. including 50 States, the Caribbean Area, and the Pacific Island Area

Focus Area: Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production

Access Status: NRCS Staff Only

Links: NRCS staff may access an overview of this dashboard via [National Bulletin 290-25-1](#). [A direct link to the Urban Agriculture Priority Data Dashboard is available here.](#)

SSRA Contact: Email SM.FPAC.USDA.OUTCOMES@USDA.GOV with questions about this dashboard or to request a demo from the NRCS Outcomes Team.

Web Soil Survey

Description: Web Soil Survey (WSS) provides soil data and information produced by the National Cooperative Soil Survey. It is operated by NRCS and provides access to the largest natural resource information system in the world. NRCS has soil maps and data available online for more than 95 percent of the nation's counties and anticipates having 100 percent in the near future. The site is updated and maintained online as the single authoritative source of soil survey information.

Geographic Scope: Whole U.S. including 50 States, the Caribbean Area, and the Pacific Island Area

Focus Area: Soil Science

Access Status: Public

Links: Additional details are [available on the WSS home page](#). You may [access WSS directly via this webpage](#).

SSRA Contact: Email nrcs-nssc-soilshotline@usda.gov with questions about the WSS or to request additional information.

Abigail Appleman, Outreach Coordinator, NRCS, (See attached presentation handout.) Abigail Appleman reported 53 outreach activities, including farm shows and news articles. She emphasized NRCS's role in providing technical and financial assistance. Abigail explained the purpose of the State Technical Committee and subcommittees, encouraging participation in local working groups to share concerns and successes.



Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Pennsylvania

State Technical Committee, Subcommittees, And Local Work Groups



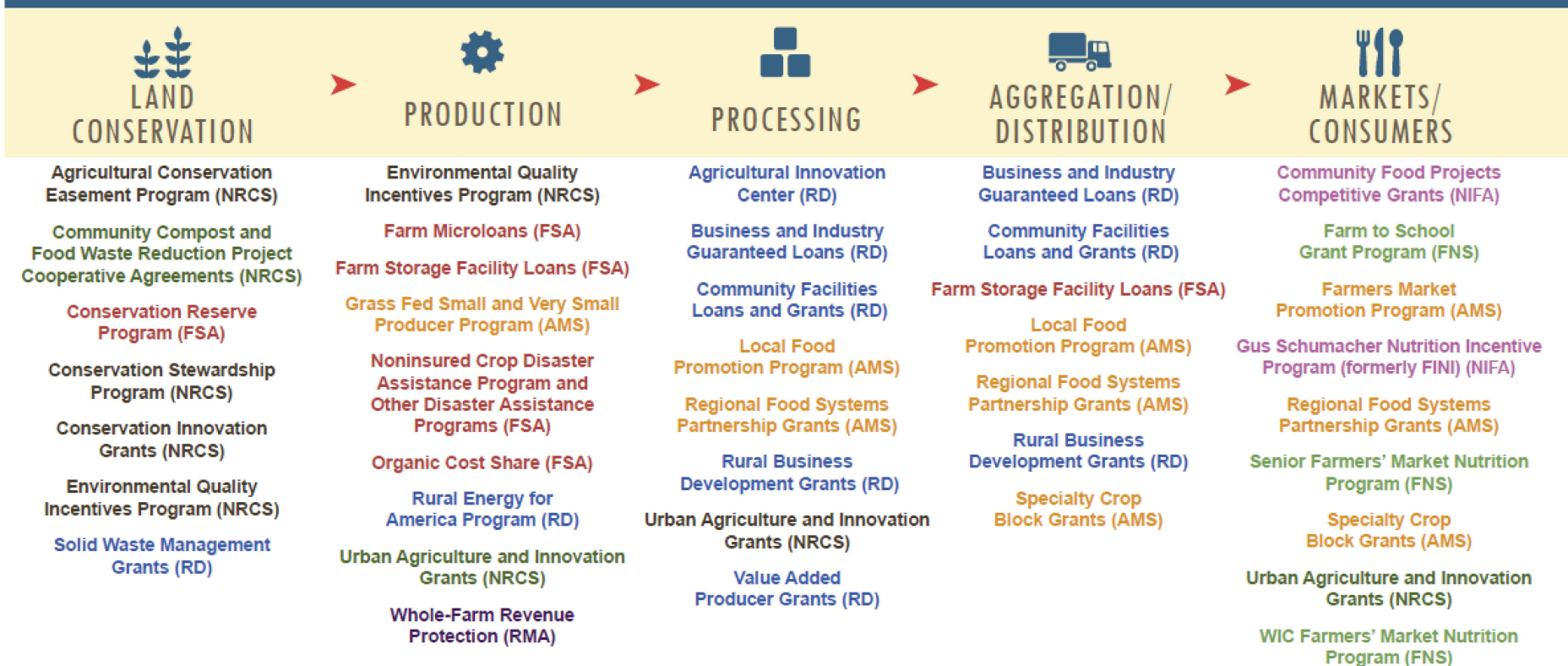
FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION
FSA | NRCS | RMA | Business Center



United States
Department of
Agriculture

USDA PROGRAMS IN THE LOCAL FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN

USDA is committed to supporting robust regional food economies across the food chain through the programs noted below.



RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS ALONG THE SUPPLY CHAIN

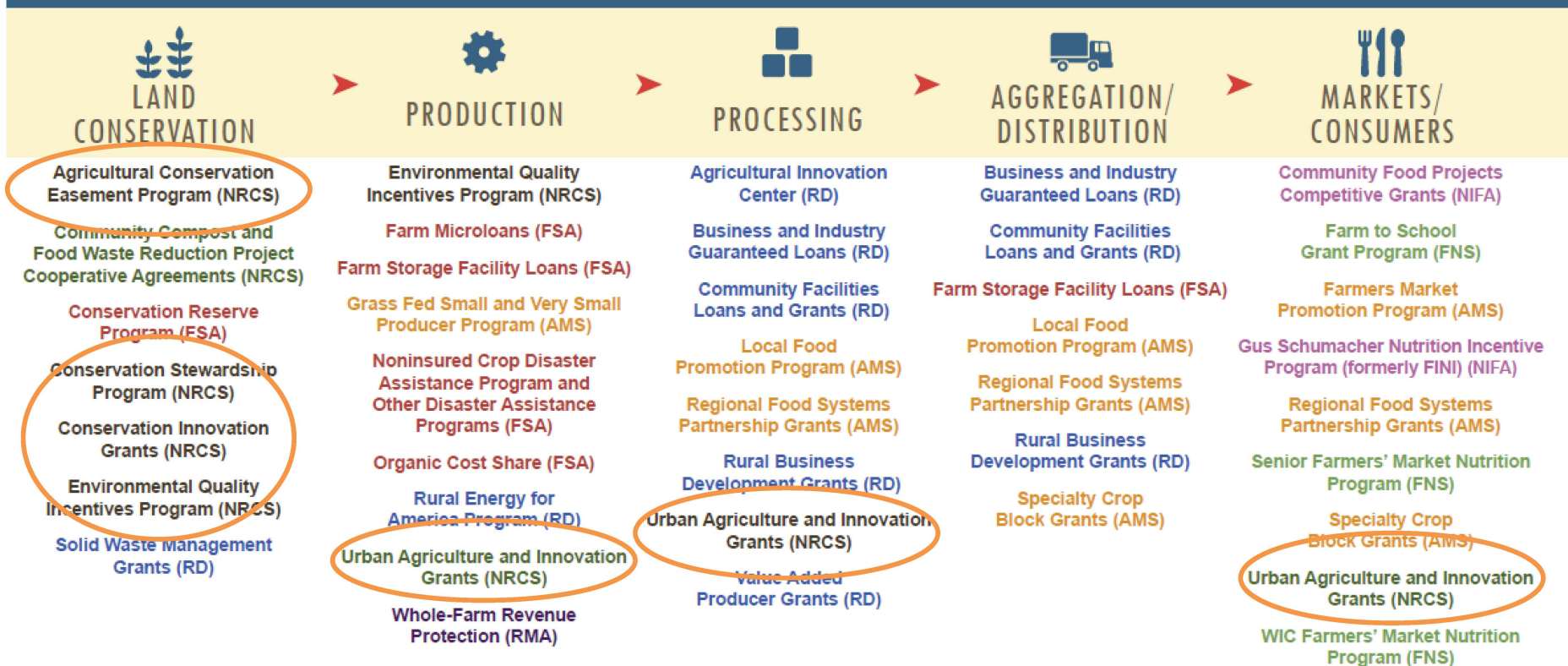
Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (NIFA)	Extension Risk Management (NIFA)	Rural Cooperative Development Grants (RD)
Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (NIFA)	Federal State Marketing Improvement Program (AMS)	Small Business Innovation Research (NIFA)
Community Prosperity Funding Opportunity (OPPE)	Food Safety Outreach Program (NIFA)	Socially Disadvantaged Group Grant (RD)
Conservation Technical Assistance (NRCS)	Organic Research & Extension Initiative (NIFA)	Specialty Crop Block Grants (AMS)
Enhancing Agricultural Opportunities for Military Veterans (AGVETS) (NIFA)	Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers Program (2501 Program) (OPPE)	Specialty Crop Research Initiative (NIFA)
		Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (NIFA)



United States
Department of
Agriculture

USDA PROGRAMS IN THE LOCAL FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN

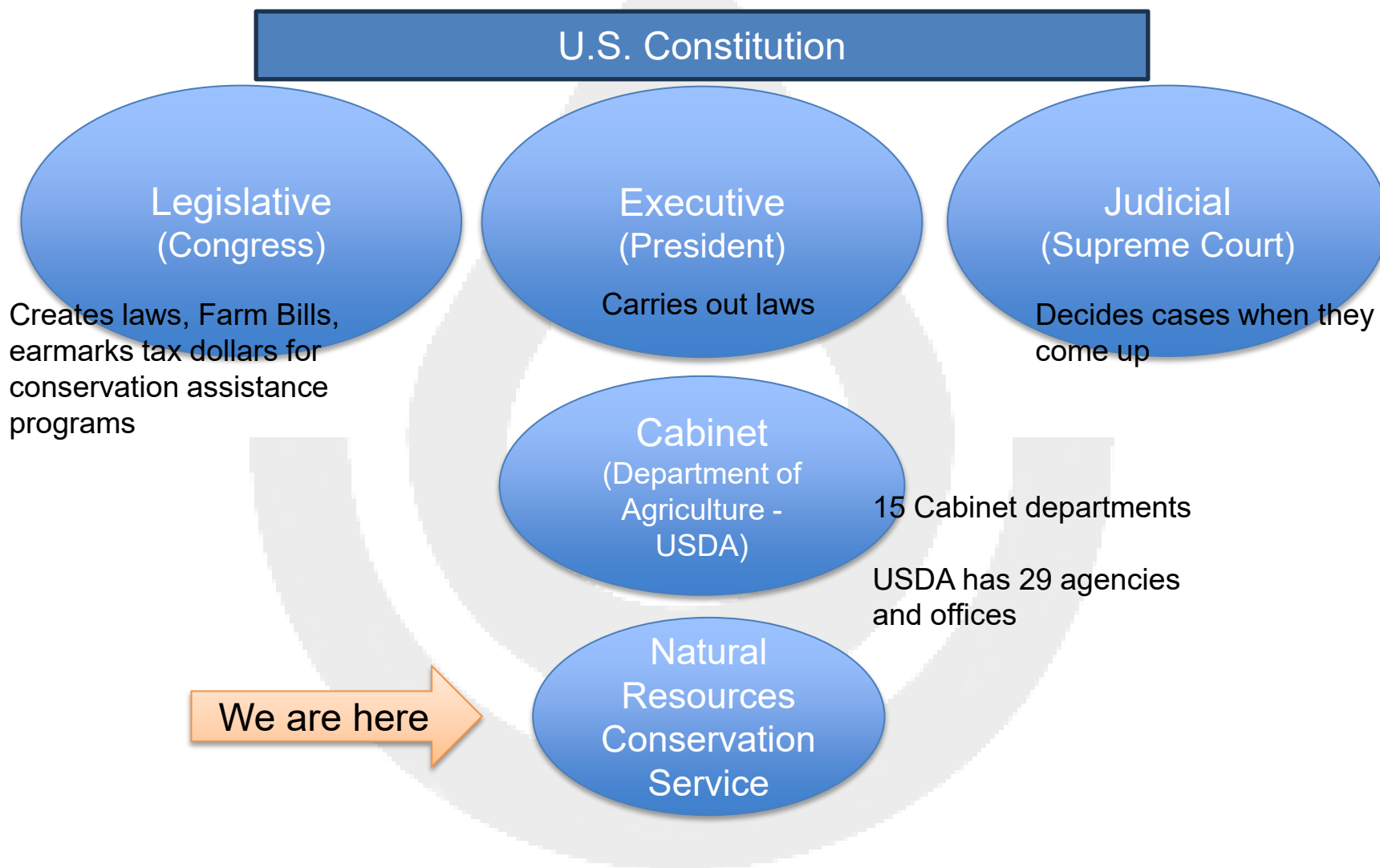
USDA is committed to supporting robust regional food economies across the food chain through the programs noted below.



RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS ALONG THE SUPPLY CHAIN

<p>Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (NIFA)</p> <p>Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (NIFA)</p> <p>Community Prosperity Funding Opportunity (OPPE)</p> <p>Conservation Technical Assistance (NRCS)</p> <p>Enhancing Agricultural Opportunities for Military Veterans (AGVETS) (NIFA)</p>	<p>Extension Risk Management (NIFA)</p> <p>Federal State Marketing Improvement Program (AMS)</p> <p>Food Safety Outreach Program (NIFA)</p> <p>Organic Research & Extension Initiative (NIFA)</p> <p>Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers Program (2501 Program) (OPPE)</p>	<p>Rural Cooperative Development Grants (RD)</p> <p>Small Business Innovation Research (NIFA)</p> <p>Socially Disadvantaged Group Grant (RD)</p> <p>Specialty Crop Block Grants (AMS)</p> <p>Specialty Crop Research Initiative (NIFA)</p> <p>Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (NIFA)</p>
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Quick Review of Federal Government Structure





What does USDA-NRCS do?

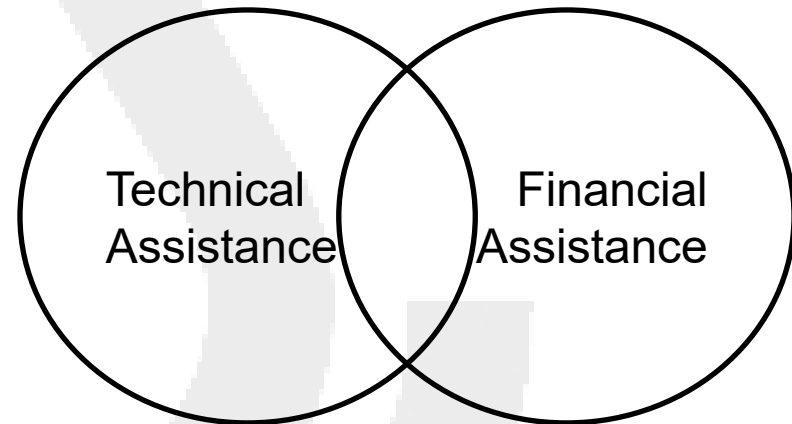
Since 1935, NRCS has provided leadership in a partnership effort to help America's private land owners and managers conserve their soil, water, and other natural resources.

Mission: Helping People Help the Land

Vision: Productive Lands – Healthy Environment

Natural resources include

Soil
Water
Air
Plants
Animals
Energy
Humans



“Resource Concerns” are areas on the land where natural resources are being depleted

“Conservation Plan” belongs to the producer and maps out opportunities for the next 5 to 10 years

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/conservation-basics/conservation-by-state/pennsylvania>

What is the State Technical Committee (STC)?

The Pennsylvania State Technical Committee **provides advice** for technical considerations and technical guidelines necessary to **implement conservation** provisions of USDA legislation. The committee also helps assure that Civil Rights requirements in Program Delivery are met. The NRCS State Conservationist chairs the committee.

The members of the State Technical Committee provide recommendations on issues within a variety of conservation programs. Although the State Technical Committee has no implementation or enforcement authority, USDA gives strong consideration to the Committee's recommendations.

[Find more information at this link.](#)

What is the State Technical Committee (STC)?

The State Technical Committee is composed of individuals and groups who represent interests in a variety of natural resource sciences and occupations, including the following:

Soil

Water

Air

Plants

Wetlands

Wildlife

Agricultural Community

Environmental Community



What do committee members do?

Committee Members contribute in ways like:

- Identifying natural resource concerns and program needs.
- Providing information and recommendations to USDA on conservation priorities.
- Recommending Pennsylvania NRCS and national program policy.
- Recommending conservation practice standards and specifications.
- Assisting NRCS with public outreach and communication efforts to help ensure all producers have access to USDA assistance

How are State Technical Committee Meetings Conducted in Pennsylvania?

- State Technical Committee meetings are conducted as an open discussion about conservation of natural resources, and the public is invited to attend.
- Individuals participating in the meetings can address the committee to ask questions and present their opinions and recommendations.
- The State Conservationist may assemble certain members into subcommittees to discuss, examine, and focus on a particular technical or programmatic topic.
- The subcommittees will report back during the State Technical Committee Meeting.
- All recommendations will be considered in a public meeting.

Current Subcommittees:

Urban Agriculture
Forestry
Wildlife

Statewide Technical Committee Meetings

- Four times a year, the STCO meets in Harrisburg, PA. (January, April, July, October)
- If you can't meet in person, you can join with the link or call in.
- Meeting dates, agendas, and minutes are available on the Pennsylvania NRCS website:
www.pa.nrcs.usda.gov



Pennsylvania
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Local Work Groups (LWG)

- Organized by the area NRCS staff, usually covers a few counties.
- Meets once per year.
- Staff gather suggestions for local natural resource priorities and prepare for funding of the coming year.
- Participants include agricultural producers, landowners, NRCS staff, the County Conservation District, and other professionals in soil, water, wetlands, plant, and wildlife sciences.

Statewide Technical Committee

- Advisory role
- Assist in making recommendations relating to the implementation and technical aspects of natural resource conservation activities and programs
- Statewide focus
- Meetings are held quarterly
- State Conservationist serves as Chairperson

Membership includes agricultural producers, nonindustrial private forest land owners, and other professionals who represent a variety of disciplines in soil, water, wetlands, plant, and wildlife sciences.

Local Work Groups

- Provide recommendations on local natural resource priorities and criteria for conservation activities and programs
- Focus on local area
- Meetings are held annually
- Recommendations are sent to the State Conservationist



United States Department of Agriculture

Pennsylvania
Natural Resources Conservation Service



Become a Member!

NRCS can better serve producers like you when we hear from you! Come and be an advocate.

Members of the Statewide Technical Committee and Local Work Groups represent the agricultural community of Pennsylvania and provide vital input to the State Conservationist.

If you are interested in becoming a member, send your request to the State Conservationist explaining your interest and relevant credentials.

Denise Coleman
USDA-NRCS
359 East Park Drive, Suite 2
Harrisburg, PA 17111



QUESTIONS?

Abigail Appleman
State Outreach Coordinator
USDA-NRCS

abigail.appleman@usda.gov

570-660-0536

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

Melissa Hanner, Easement Program Manager, NRCS, (See attached presentation handout.) Melissa Hanner announced new easement programs under ACEP and RCPP, with five easement contracts finalized using IRA funding. Applications for the next round are due by March 1, 2025. Required materials include a signed application form, maps, deed of ownership, and USDA paperwork filed at the FSA. Geographic Area Rate Caps determine ACEP WRE easements.

FY2025 Easement Programs

ACEP (Agricultural Conservation Easement Program)

- ACEP ALE (Agricultural Land Easements)
- ACEP WRE (Wetland Reserve Easements)

RCPP (Regional Conservation Partnership Program)

- RCPP-1847 Kittatinny Ridge Conservation Landscape
- RCPP-2035 Buffalo Creek (Armstrong County)
- RCPP-2712 Farm Preservation & Climate Change Mitigation



FY2025 New Easement Contracts

Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)

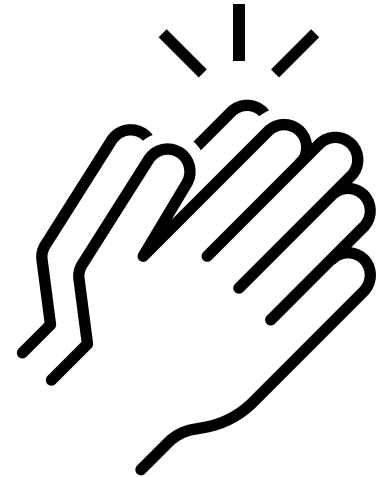
Agricultural Easement Program (ACEP)

IRA ACEP ALE

- 5 contracts (Adams, Schuylkill)
- 385 acres
- \$316,830.00

IRA ACEP WRE

- 1 contract (Blair)
- 13.7 acres
- \$61,750.00



New Easements Applications – Apply by March 1, 2025

- **Signed Application Form**
- **Maps of Proposed Easement Boundary**
- **Deed of Ownership**
- **USDA Paperwork filed at the Farm Service Agency (FSA)**

ACEP-WRE

- US Held Easements
- NRCS Service Center takes application

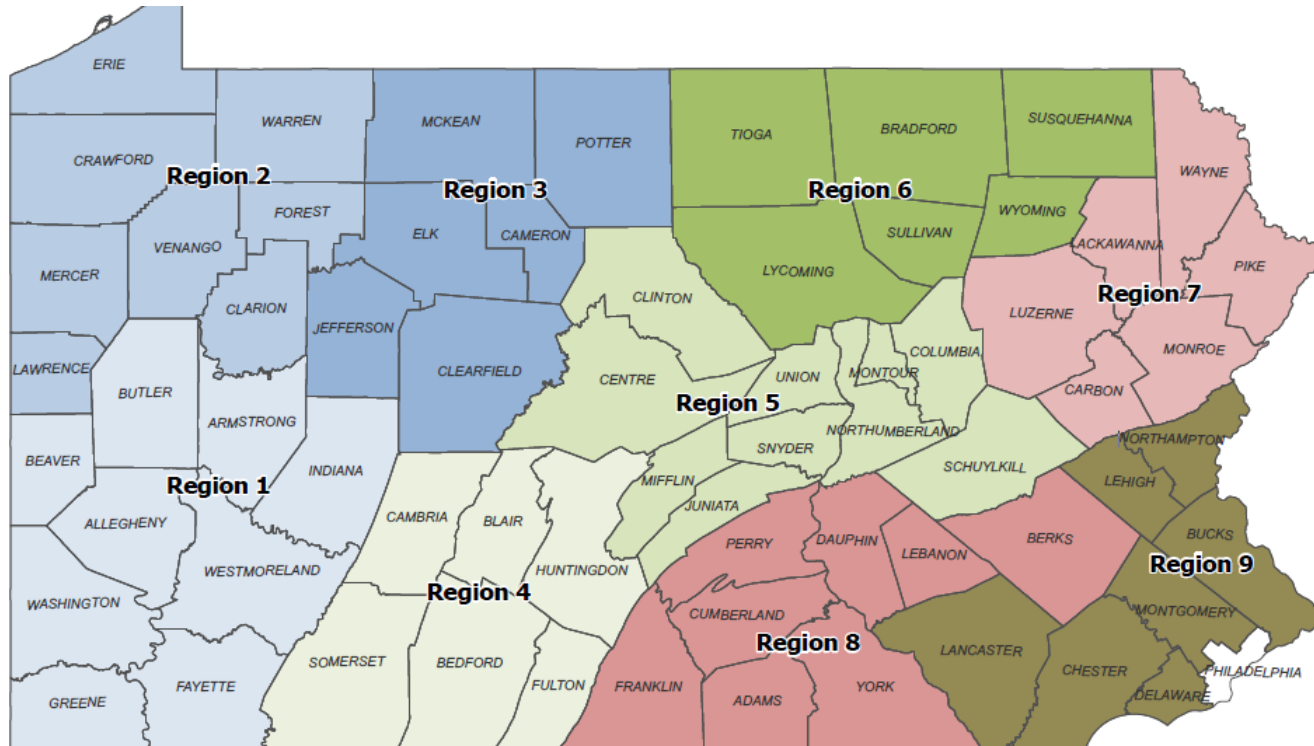
RCPP and ACEP-ALE

- Entity Held Easements
- Partner takes application

FY 2025 Geographic Area Rate Caps (GARCs)

ACEP WRE Easement Valuation

The value of the conservation easement is calculated as 95% of the appraised value, not to exceed (NTE) the GARC.



Not To Exceed (NTE) Rate per acre for Appraisals		
Legend	Market Area	NTE
	Region 1	\$6,526
	Region 2	\$5,880
	Region 3	\$5,880
	Region 4	\$5,880
	Region 5	\$6,967
	Region 6	\$5,880
	Region 7	\$5,880
	Region 8	\$8,378
	Region 9	\$13,984



Easement Stewardship Activities

FY 2025 Easement Monitoring Workload

Stewardship Monitoring Workload was sent to local NRCS staff on 11/13/2024.

- Easements with violation follow up need or Compatible Use Authorizations (CUA) due 3/7/2025
- All other reports due 6/30/2025

Non-Stewardship monitoring workload sent to partnering entities 12/3/2024, and reports are due 6/30/2025.



FY 2025 Monitoring Numbers

	FRPP	ACEP-ALE	RCPP-ALE	WRP	ACEP-WRE	RCPP-WRE	GRP	ALE-GSS	EWPP-FPE	HFRP	TOTALS
On-site	17	-	-	62	13	-	3	-	4	1	100
Entity	396	43	5	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	445
Off-site	71	-	-	110	17	1	8	-	2	4	213
# Reports	484	43	5	172	30	1	11	1	6	5	758
# Easements	452	42	5	167	30	1	11	1	5	5	719
Acreage	59,341	4,343	658	7,539	1,018	41	1,105	628	63	1,048	75,784

Foresight Maintenance/Repair Work

- New Partnership agreement to facilitate restoration projects on Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) and Wetlands Reserve Easement (WRE) sites
- Priority placed on climate-smart practices
- One project package is out for bid
 - 3 projects in Franklin County (one WRE and two WRPs)
 - Work includes 7.3 acres of mechanical control of phragmites and reed canary grass, 16.7 acres of herbicide application for thistle, phragmites, and reed canary grass, and 7.3 acres of wildlife habitat planting.
- One project in solicitation package development for future contract.
 - WRP in Franklin County (WRP)
 - Work includes amending the drop box height to lower max pool elevation, restabilizing water control structure and embankment.

Continued Foresight Maintenance/Repair Work

- Two easement repair plans are with NRCS Staff who are finalizing the implementation plans.
 - WRE project in Lancaster will treat invasive species in upland and replant to native cool season grasses.
 - WRP project in Columbia will treat invasive species in upland and along embankments.
- Talked with local NRCS staff regarding five other easement projects that qualify for repair/maintenance work. NRCS staff will work over the winter and spring to develop the plans and designs required for future solicitation.
- Many more to come!

Pennsylvania NRCS Easements

Points of Contact

New applications - melissa.hanner@usda.gov

Stewardship – michael.albert@usda.gov

* Mick has taken a new position on the Programs Staff.

ASTC-Partnerships - susan.parry@usda.gov

Program Assistant - luke.marquart@usda.gov

Program Assistant - dane.lauver@usda.gov



iStock Credit: Haidamac

Mick Albert, Easement Stewardship Update, NRCS, Mick Albert reported that stewardship monitoring workloads were sent to local staff on November 13, 2024, and to partnering entities on December 3, 2024, with reports due by June 30, 2025. He provided updates on completed and pending easement projects.

Ashley Lenig, CSP Program Manager, NRCS, (See attached presentation handout.) Ashley Lenig reviewed FY25 contract obligations for EQIP-IRA and CSP renewals, noting 62 contracts covering 15,464.20 acres and \$3,610,409 in obligations. The FY24 CSP allocation was \$16,388,000, with \$12,777,591 remaining. Applications are due by June 30, 2025. Ashley also covered the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) update. (See attached presentation handout.)



United States Department of Agriculture

PA NRCS Programs Team

Financial Assistance Programs Update Conservation Stewardship Program

***Pennsylvania State Technical Committee Meeting
Ashley Lenig, Conservation Program Manager***

January 22, 2025

Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

nrcs.usda.gov/

Conservation Stewardship Program

CSP Renewal Obligations in FY2025

62 contracts

15,464.20 acres

\$3,610,409



Conservation Stewardship Program

CSP FY 2025 Allocation

- CSP \$7,070,000
- CSP IRA \$9,318,000
- Total: \$16,388,000

Remaining Allocation

CSP \$5,022,988

CSP IRA \$7,754,603

Total: \$12,777,591



Conservation Stewardship Program

CSP FY 2025

CSP Ranking Pools

Ranking Pool Name
NIPF-PA W Classic FY25
NIPF-PA NE Classic FY25
NIPF-PA SE Classic FY25
NIPF-PA BFR Classic FY25
NIPF-PA SDFR Classic FY25
Ag Lands-PA WEST Classic FY25
Ag Lands-PA NORTHEAST Classic FY25
Ag Lands-PA SOUTHEAST Classic FY25
Ag Lands-Statewide Organic Classic FY25
Ag Lands-Statewide BFR Classic FY25
Ag Lands-Statewide SDFR Classic FY25

CSP IRA Ranking Pools

Ranking Pool Name
IRA CSP Classic NIPF-PA W FY25
IRA CSP Classic NIPF-PA NE FY25
IRA CSP Classic NIPF-PA SE FY25
IRA CSP Classic NIPF-Statewide BFR FY25
IRA CSP Classic NIPF-Statewide SDFR FY25
IRA CSP Classic Ag Lands-PA WEST FY25
IRA CSP Classic Ag Lands-PA NORTHEAST FY25
IRA CSP Classic Ag Lands-PA SOUTHEAST FY25
IRA CSP Classic Ag Lands-Statewide BFR FY25
IRA CSP Classic Ag Lands-Statewide SDFR FY25



Conservation Stewardship Program

CSP Classic 2025-1 dates have been set.

- 1/1/25 Application Deadline
- 3/17/25 Ranking Deadline
- 6/30/25 Obligation Deadline



Questions?

Comments?



Ashley Lenig

Conservation Program Manager (CSP, CIG, NWQI)

ashley.lenig@usda.gov

Haley Dukes, the new RCPP coordinator, was introduced (See attached presentation handout.) and explained the three components of RCPP: assistance, funding, and eligibility. She introduced Two RCPP projects are under review for potential funding. Haley encouraged anyone with RCPP project ideas to reach out.



United States Department of Agriculture



RCPP Program Overview and Project Updates



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Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) - What is it?

- **Not a grant!**
 - Cooperative agreement – partners are paid for eligible work completed
 - Partners assist with outreach, education, collecting applications, measuring and reporting outcomes (environmental, social, economic)
- **Projects encompass different on-the-ground activities**
 - Land Management (EQIP-like) contracts
 - Entity-held or United States-held easements
- **Targeted approach**
 - Specific watersheds, landscapes, etc.
 - Customized screenings and rankings
- **Implementation Technical Assistance**
 - From NRCS, Partners or TSPs/3rd parties
- **Flexibility to shift applications between programs**
 - e.g. EQIP vs RCPP deadlines are the same



How it works

Assistance

- Financial Assistance (FA)
 - LM contracts
 - Easements
- Technical Assistance (TA)
 - Engagement (TA-E): PM, outreach, outcomes
 - Implementation (TA-I): design, installation, etc.

Funding

- 50% of funding for state and multi-state pool
- 50% for critical conservation areas (Ches. Bay)
- Mix of Farm Bill and IRA funding
- \$1.5B nationally in FY24
- Up to \$25M per project over a 5-year period

Eligibility

- **Partner:** state or local government, NGOs, CDs, educational institutions, producer associations
- **Landowner:** meet typical USDA requirements (AGI, HEL, etc.)
- **Land:** agricultural or non-industrial private forest land



RCPP Projects



- 1. Kittatinny Ridge Conservation Landscape**
 - Ag & forest easements
- 2. Ag BMPs in Berks Co.**
 - Water quality LM focus with Berks CD
- 3. Buffalo Creek Watershed Conservation**
 - Water quality LM and easements with Audubon and Armstrong and Butler CDs
- 4. Lancaster Clean Water**
 - Water quality LM focus in priority watersheds of county
- 5. Turkey Hill Clean Water Partnership**
 - CNMPs and water quality LM focus in Ches Bay
- 6. Healing Mine-Scarred Landscapes**
 - Multi-state mineland restoration and tree planting



RCPP Projects



7. Farmland Preservation & CC Mitigation

- Climate-smart practices on already preserved farms, plus new ag & forest easements

8. De-Listing Impaired Streams in Central PA

- Water quality LM focus in priority watersheds

9. Scaling Adoption of N Management

- Multi-state project with new technology for N management

10. Mid-Atlantic Climate Smart

- Multi-state LM focus on climate and water quality

11. NEW! GHG and Water Quality Solutions – PA Dairies

- LM focus on climate and water quality through feed management and manure management

Two more agreements are in review for potential funding.



What do the numbers say?



- 11 active RCPP projects in Pennsylvania, ranging in total project budget from \$1,169,618 to \$21,723,626
- \$97,728,464 total amount of NRCS funds allocated
- \$116,260,613 of committed cash or in-kind match from partners.



NEW! “Mid-Atlantic Dairy Farmers Producing Tangible Results through Climate Smart Solutions” RCPP-3150

Purpose:

Applicable to dairy farms that are part of MD & VA Milk Producers Cooperative Association

Climate Smart or WQ practices

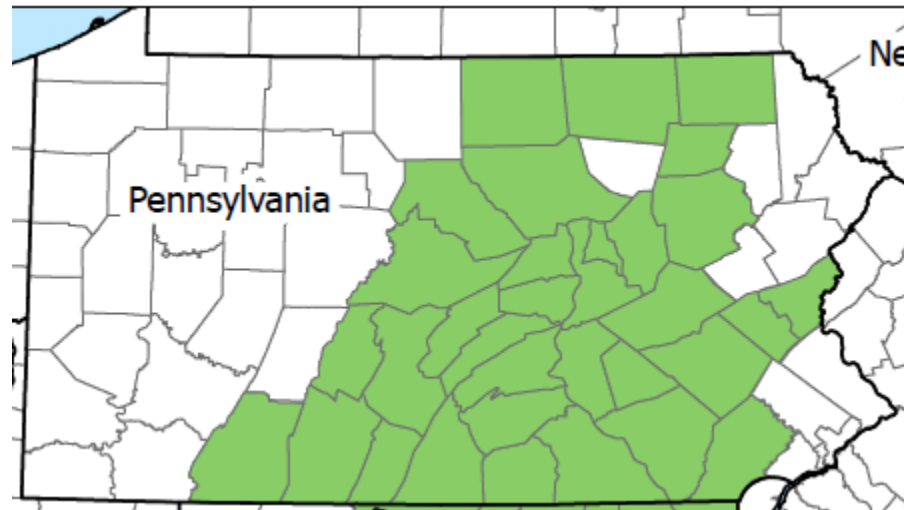
- \$4M in FA

Outreach, education, planning, design, etc

- \$700k in partner TA
- \$145k for NRCS TA

Implementation will mirror EQIP Funding

Eligible Counties:



Email and Flyer to Field Offices

- Flyer emailed to NRCS DCs in September
- WPT and Ranking has been released!

RCPP-3150

**MID-ATLANTIC DAIRY FARMERS
PRODUCING TANGIBLE RESULTS THROUGH
CLIMATE SMART SOLUTIONS**

This initiative aims to enhance the sustainability of dairy farms in Maryland, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Virginia through a comprehensive program of outreach, education, and the implementation of climate-smart practices.

NRCS Agricultural practices are eligible.

Applications Open to Producers in these Pennsylvania Counties:

Adams, Bedford, Berks, Blair, Bradford, Centre, Chester, Clinton, Columbia, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Lancaster, Lebanon, Lehigh, Luzerne, Lycoming, Mifflin, Montour, Northampton, Northumberland, Perry, Schuylkill, Snyder, Somerset, Susquehanna, Tioga, Union, Wayne, Wyoming, York

Applications should include projects demonstrating these outcomes

- Water quality improvements
- Reductions in greenhouse gas emissions
- Enhanced soil health
- Greater farm efficiency

To apply, complete the application, & specify that you're applying for "RCPP-3150"

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RCPP Project Ideas



- If a partner has a great idea for a future RCPP project proposal, have them contact RCPP Coordinator to discuss
- Partners should not wait until the Notice of Funding Opportunity is published and throw together an application at the last minute
- Given enough time, State Office staff can work with Partners to develop a project concept that will be high impact and make sure all parties on are the same page
 - Goals
 - Impact
 - Staffing



Please reach out with any questions



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Open Forum begins but there are no questions or comments in the chat

END OF MEETING

Sign In and Attendance

NAME	ORGANIZATION
Appleman, Abigail	
Albert, Mick	
Alleman, Gary	
Alleman, Troy	
Blanka-Evans, Kristin	
Braswell, Demka	
Bresaw, Katheryn	
Chaplin, Jeffrey	
Coleman, Denise	
Cornelius, Ryan	
Dalton, Dan	
Eby, Rachelle	
Feinberg, Liz	
Gardner, Wadia	
Grasser, Alyssa	
Hanner, Melissa	
Hartman, Bob	
Hartzell, Sean	
Hault, Susan	
Hebelka, Joseph	
Kann, David	
Lenig, Ashley	
Letavie, Erin	
Ludwig, Dan	
Marquart, Luke	
Martin, Titus	
Martinez, Gisella	
McCarthy, Rose	
McGee, Sara	
Ombalski, Katie	
Palmer, James	
Parry, Susan	
Patino-Rodregues, Freddie	
Paulter, Kevin	
Peters, Tim	
Plowden, Yuri	
Shambaugh, Brenda	
Sigmund, Chris	
Smeltz, Heather	

[illegible]