



# Programs Updates – May 2025

Keith Kloubec – ASTC for Programs

Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service

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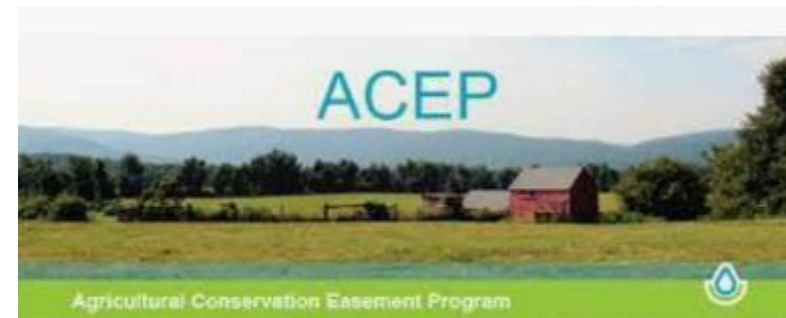
# Topics

## 2025 Program Updates

Big Picture

Details

## Local Working Group Opportunities



# Programs



Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service

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# The Good

- Interest in Conservation remains HIGH
- MN NRCS continues to request and secure more program funding to address requests
- Most customers see value MN's conservation work
- MN is fortunate

**Funding, State/Local Support & Partnerships**

The logo features a stylized white line graphic on the left that forms a bracket-like shape, enclosing the text "PARTNERSHIPS FOR" and "COMMODITIES". The text "CLIMATE-SMART" is prominently displayed in the center in a large, bold, white sans-serif font.

# PARTNERSHIPS FOR **CLIMATE-SMART** COMMODITIES



April 14, 2025 - Moving Forward

Partnerships for Climate Smart Commodities reformed and overhauled into the Advancing Markets for Producers (AMP).

\$3 +Billion in 141 projects

Farmer First policy priorities to be reviewed:

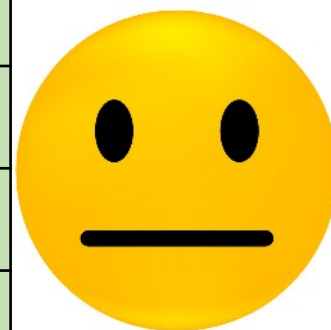
- A minimum of 65% of federal funds must go to producers;
- Grant recipients must have enrolled at least one producer as of 12/31/2024; and
- Grant recipients must have made a payment to at least one producer as of 12/31/2024.

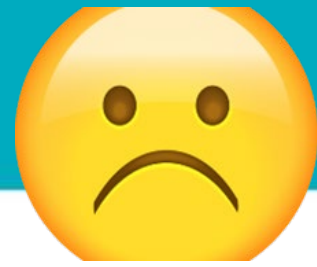
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## The Bad – or at least, the uncertain...

IRA funding in millions					
	2023	2024	2025	2026	IRA total
EQIP	\$ 250	\$ 1,750	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,450	\$ 8,450
CSP	\$ 250	\$ 500	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,500	\$ 3,250
RCPP	\$ 250	\$ 800	\$ 1,500	\$ 2,400	\$ 4,950
ACEP	\$ 100	\$ 200	\$ 500	\$ 600	\$ 1,400
CTA	<p>Feb 26th Exec Order “terminating the Green New Deal” – “paused” IRA activities. This included new obligations, amendments and payments. Since that time, the Sec of Ag reviewed and has lifted the pause for NRCS producer contracts that were previously obligated, but new obligations remain on pause as of today. FY26 fund status also under review.</p>				\$ 1,000
Carbon Program					\$ 300
Admin					\$ 100



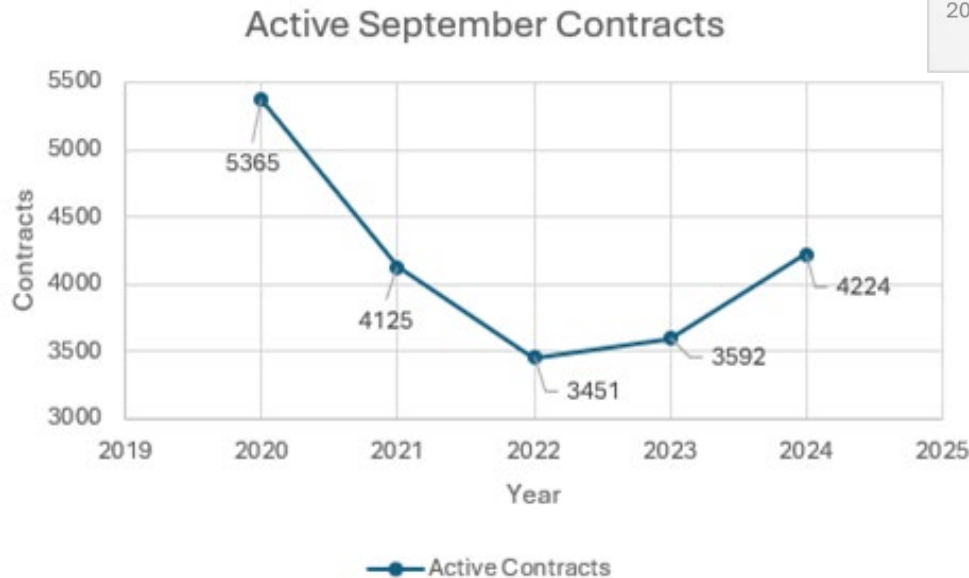


# The Ugly = Opportunities

Staffing →



← Workload



# Workload Management

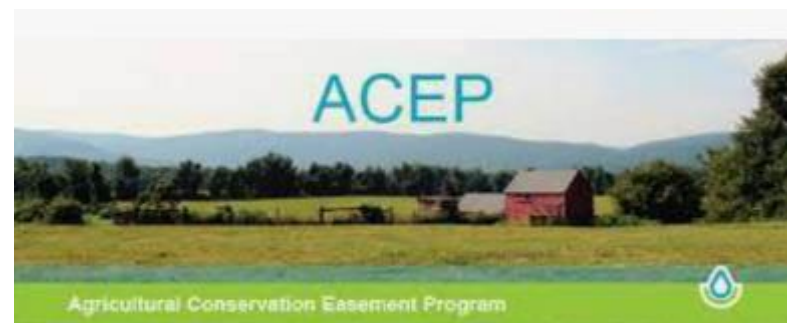
**Conservation needs are not changing  
but how we address them will need to.**



**Priorities  
Partners  
Processes**



## 2025 Program Updates



A photograph of a rural landscape featuring a green field in the foreground, several barns and a silo in the middle ground, and rolling hills in the background under a cloudy sky.

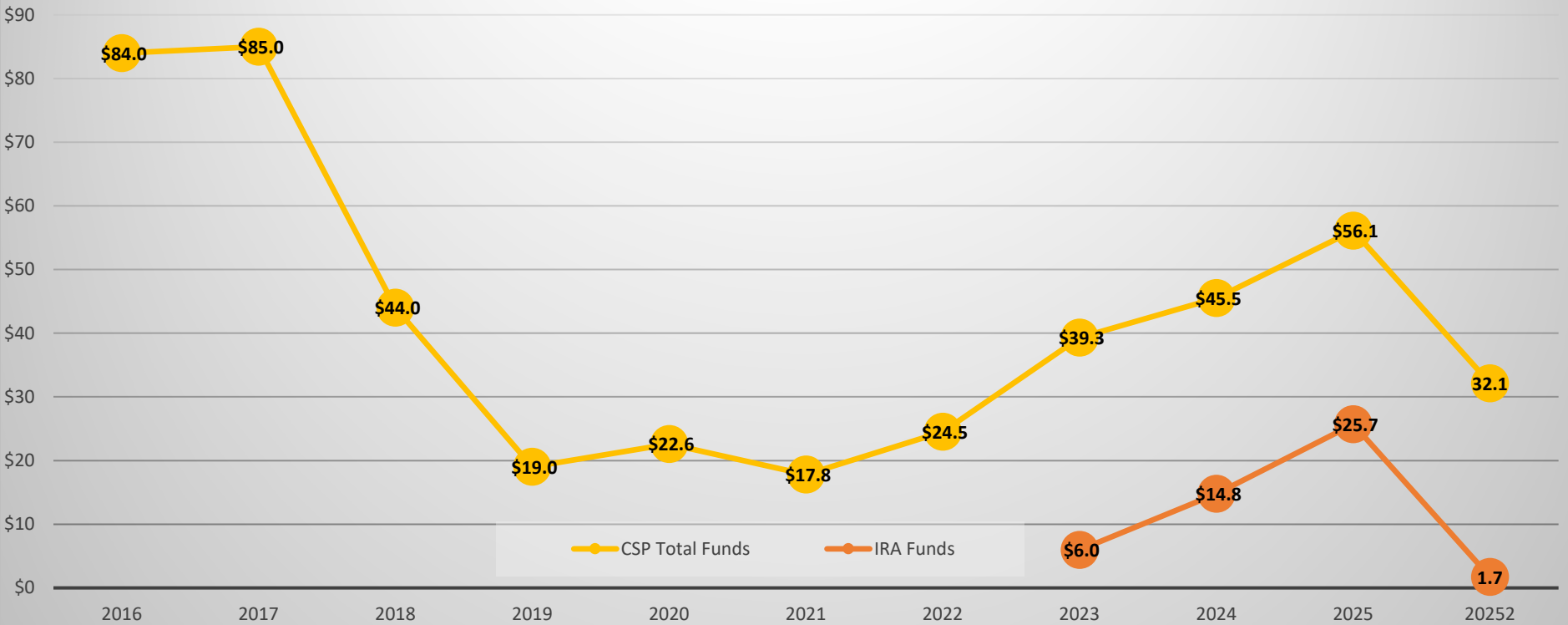
# CSP

Conservation Stewardship Program



## **FY25 Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)**

## MN CSP Funds (in Millions)



## FY2025 Initial CSP (including IRA) Allocation: \$56.1M

- Organic-\$200,000
- CSP Classic \$33.6M
  - Farm Bill Funds: \$18.1M
  - IRA Funds: \$15.4M
- CSP Renewals-\$22.4M
  - Farm Bill Funds: \$12.1M
  - IRA Funds: \$10.3M
- Additional Funds Request In April 2025: \$12M (Farm Bill Funds)

March 10<sup>th</sup>-2025 Renewal application deadline

November 15<sup>th</sup> –2025 Classic application deadline





# 2025 CSP Renewals

## 2025 CSP Renewal Applications:

- Farm Bill Renewal-190
- IRA Renewal-19

## 2025 CSP Renewal Obligations

- Farm Bill Renewal
  - 59 Contracts Obligated
  - \$9.4M Obligated
  - Contract Average: \$159,500
- IRA Renewals
  - 19 Contracts Obligated
  - \$1.7M Obligated
  - Contract average: \$88,200

Unobligated Renewal Allocation Funds Rolled Over to Classic




# 2025 CSP Classic

## CSP Classic Applications: 1,947

- **Farm Bill Applications Ranked-865**
  - Total Requested Funding: \$93M
  - Preapproved Applications: 256
  - Preapproved Application Estimate: \$19.6M
- **IRA Ranked-Paused** 

## CSP Classic Obligations (as of May 1, 2025)

- **Farm Bill Funds**
  - 51 Contracts Obligated
  - \$4.5 M
  - Contract Average: \$ 86,224
- **IRA Renewals-Paused** 



# 2026 CSP Renewals

## 2021 Contracts Eligible for CSP Renewal Application-188

- Notifications mailed on or before April 18, 2025

## 2026 CSP Renewal Timeline

- Deadline for application: June 6, 2025
- Contract obligation deadline: December 12, 2025
- Allocation not known





# EQIP

Environmental Quality Incentives Program



## **FY25 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**




## MN EQIP Funds (in Millions)





# EQIP 2025

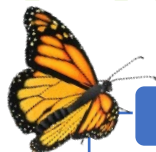
## Received 3,936 EQIP applications

- **General Farm Bill Funds: \$46 Million**
  - Applications currently selected for funding: 478 applications
  - Contracts already funded: 443 contracts
- **IRA EQIP: \$40.5 Million** 
  - Applications selected for funding: 204 applications
  - Contracts already funded: 18 contracts





# EQIP National Initiates



## Monarch Butterfly

- Allocation: \$1.8 Million

## Organic (NOI and OTI)

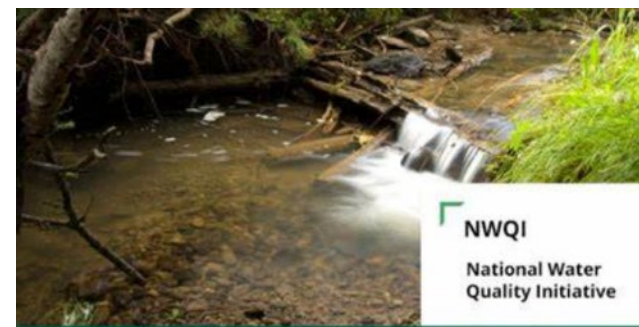
- Allocation: \$615,000

## MRBI \$1.3M

- Lower St Croix: \$144,000
- Goose Lake: \$86,000
- Backes Lake: \$808,834
- West Indian Creek: \$316,000

## NWQI \$2.1M

- Whiskey Creek: \$28,320
- Buffalo River: \$1,115,040
- Doran Creek: \$1,035,000





# On track...

## National Goals:



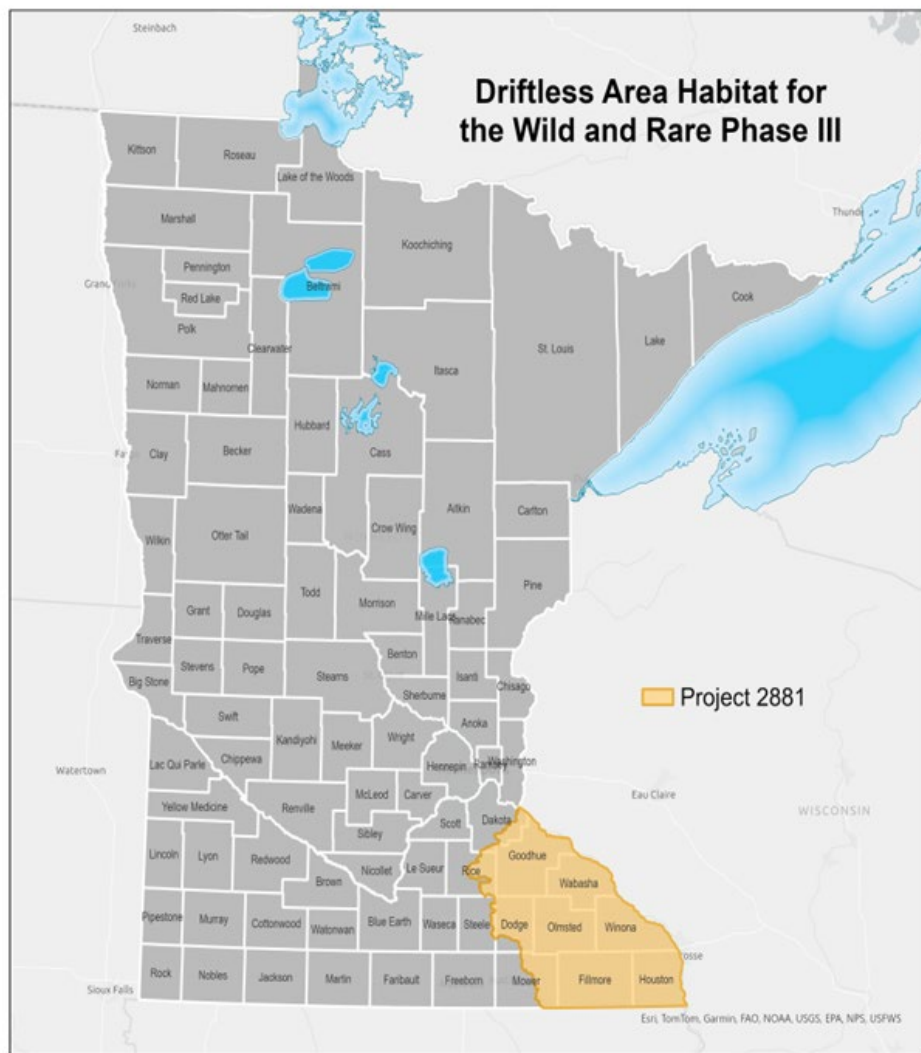
- **Beginning Farmer or Rancher (BFR): 5% goal**
  - ✓ Currently 15% contracts obligated to BFR (\$7M)
- **Socially Disadvantaged (SD) producer: 5% goal**
  - ✓ Currently at 7% obligations towards SD producers
- **Livestock: 60% goal**
  - ✓ Currently 30% obligated towards livestock related practices
- **Wildlife: 10% goal**
  - ✓ Currently 5% obligated towards wildlife practices



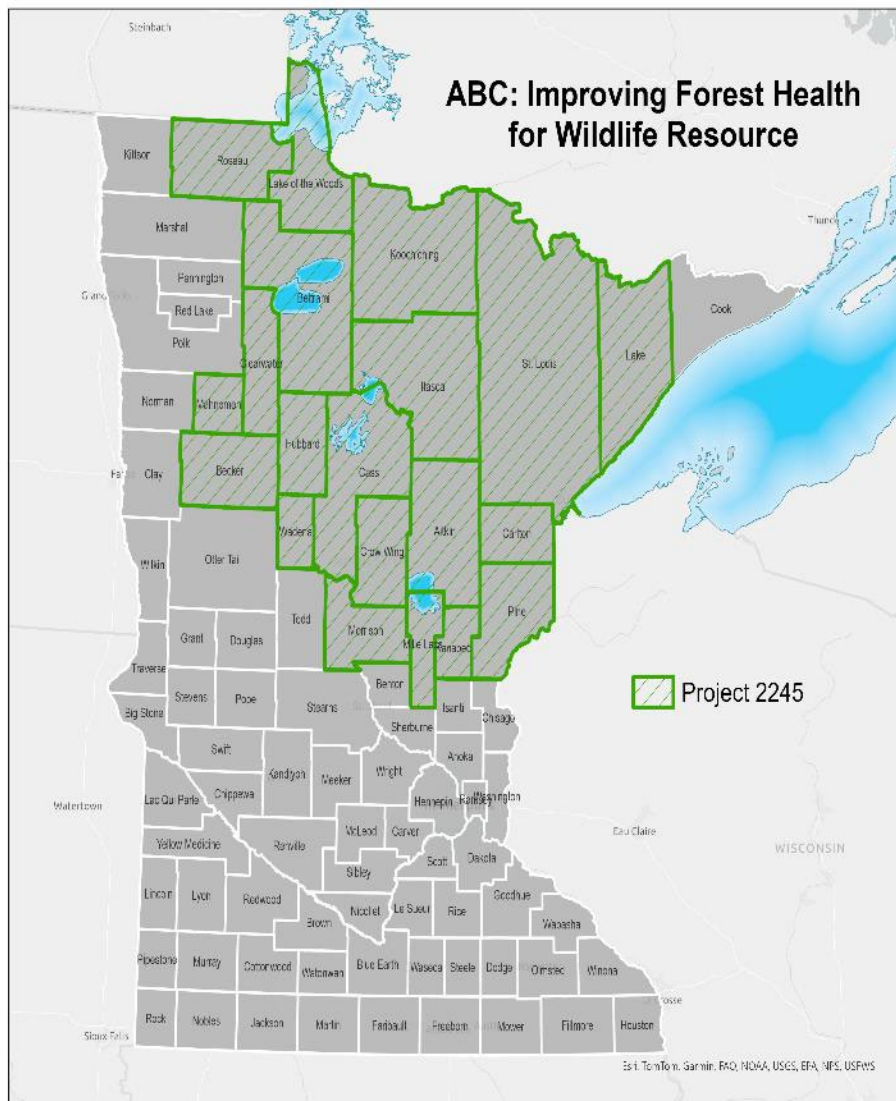
**RCPP**



**REGIONAL CONSERVATION  
PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM**

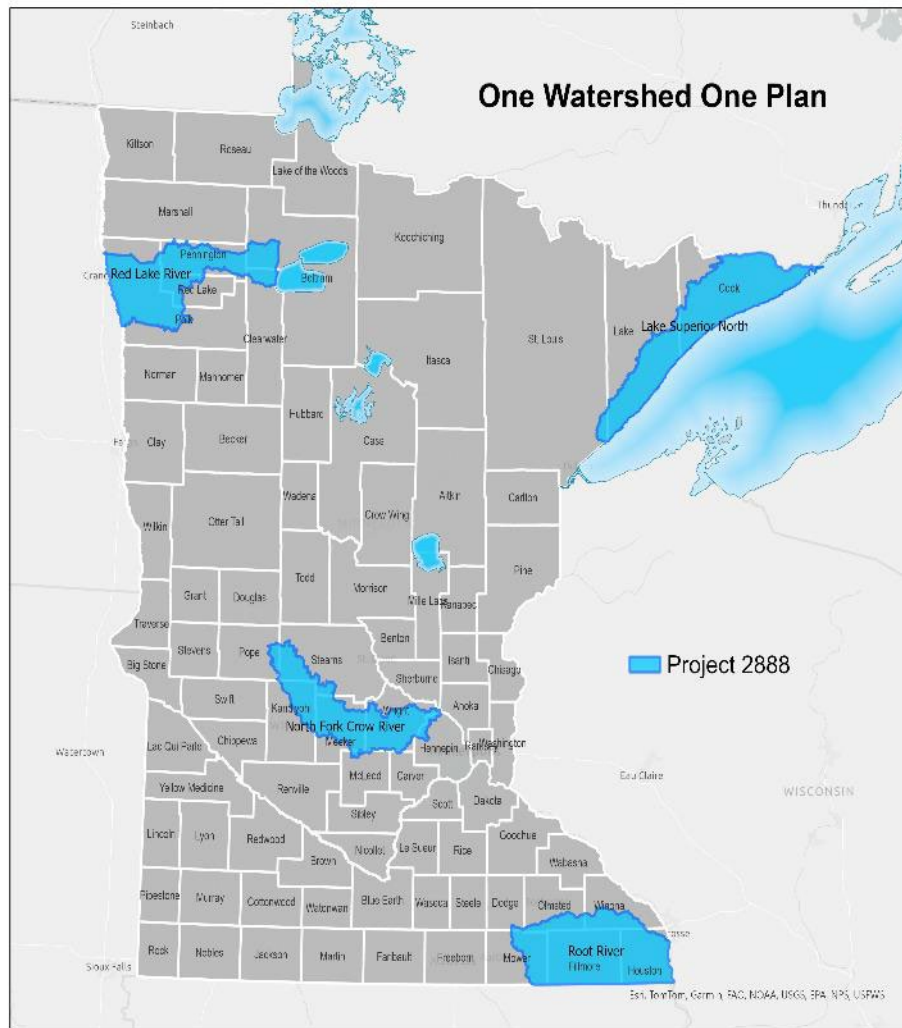


- **2881 Trout Unlimited Driftless Area -Habitat for the Wild and Rare Phase (MN, WI)**
- \$990,000 available for the project
- Dakota, Rice, Goodhue, Steele, Dodge, Olmstead, Wabasha, Winona, Mower, Fillmore and Houston counties



- **2245 - American Bird Conservancy (ABC) – Improving Forest Health for Wildlife Resources (MN, WI, MI)**
- \$150,000 remaining for the project.
- Currently have 30 applications being assessed and ranked for this signup.
- There are 20 counties in the NE that are in the project area.

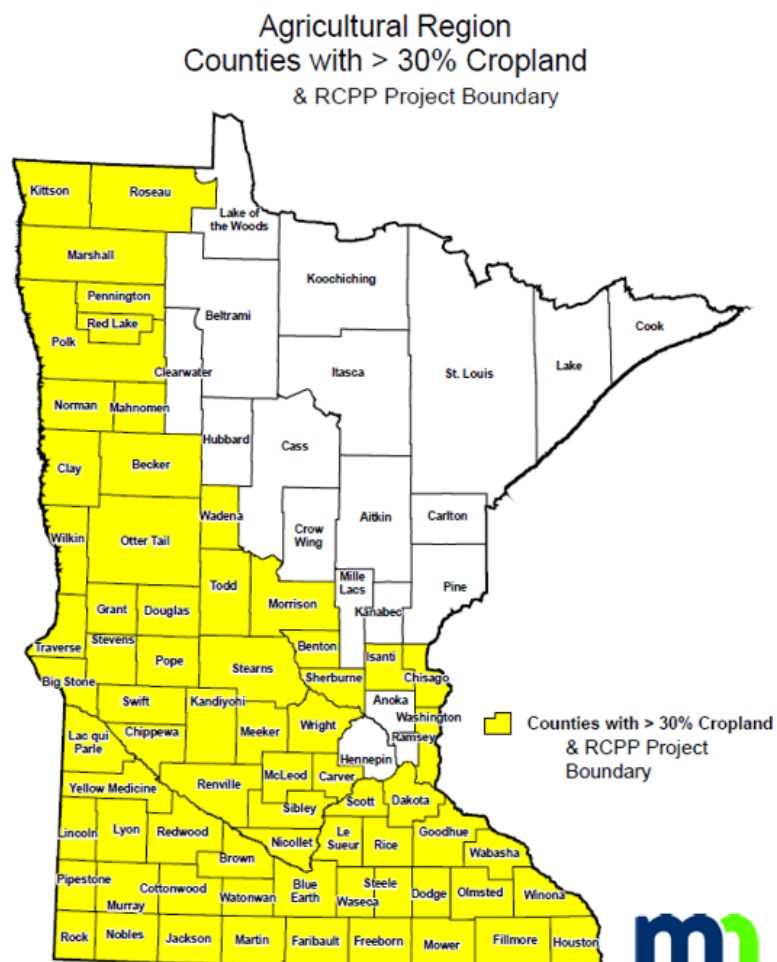




- **2888 –Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts - One Watershed One Plan (MASWCD – 1W1P)**
- Approximately \$1M remaining for the project.
- There were 4 Watersheds in FY25
  - Red Lake River: 8 preapproved for \$543,919
  - Lake Superior North: 8 preapproved for \$143,665
  - North Fork Crow: 8 preapproved for \$360,000
  - Root River: 0 applications



# 3053 -BWSR - Advancing Soil Health in MN Agriculture



- FY23 Award
- Alternative Funding Arrangement (AFA)
- \$25M RCPP to Producers
- \$25M BWSR Staff, Training and to producers



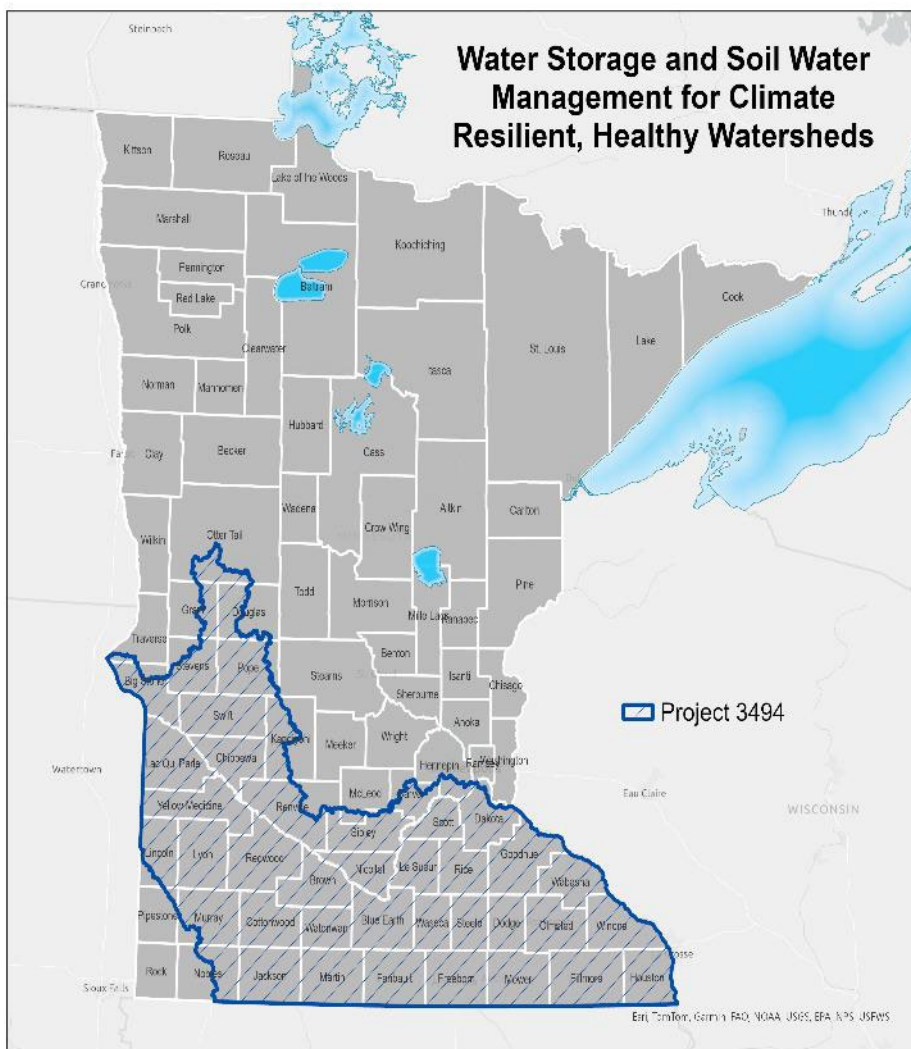
## FY 24 Awards

**3494 – BWSR - AFA:** Water Storage and Soil Water Management for Climate-Resilient, Healthy Watersheds

**4210 - American Farmland Trust - Classic:** Minnesota Farmland Protection Project: Bridging the Gap Between Landowners and Emerging Farmers

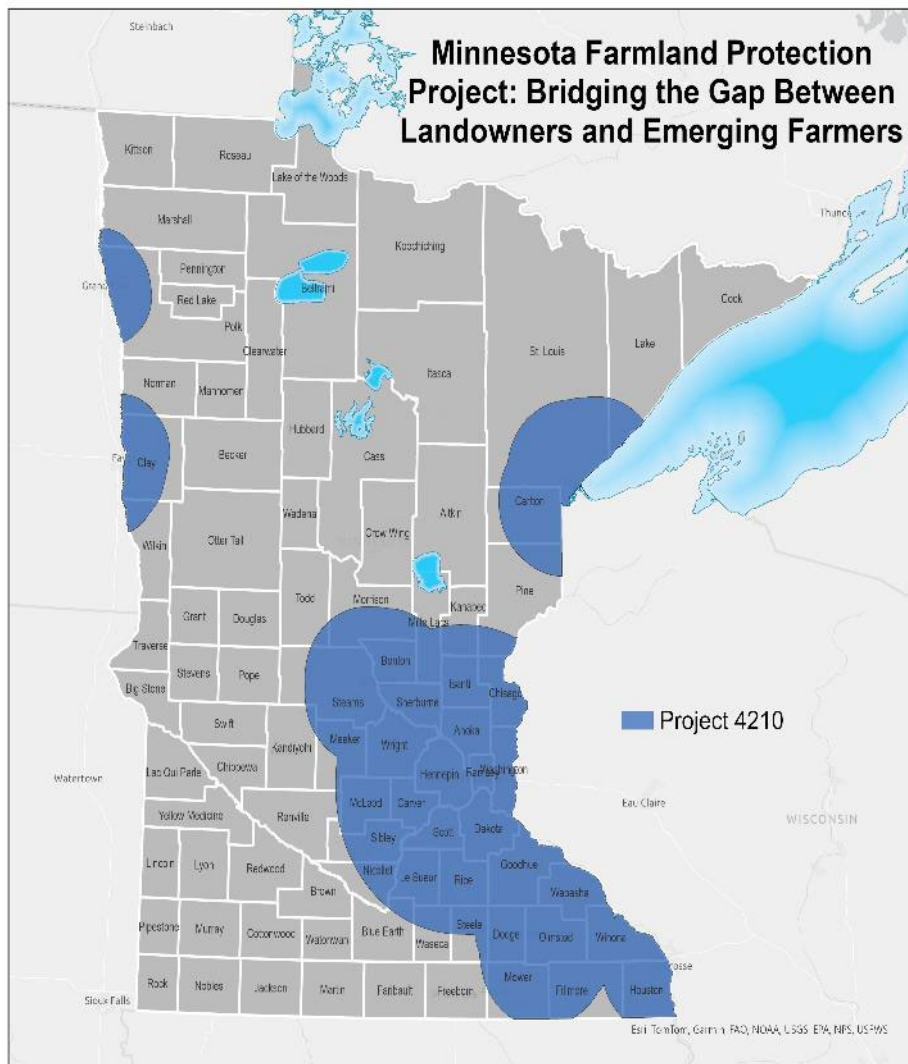
**3513 - Morrison SWCD - Classic:** Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape - Phase 3

**4320 - MDA (Renewed) - Classic :** Expanding Innovative Irrigation Practices to Protect Groundwater



## 3494 - BWSR: Water Storage and Soil Water Management for Climate-Resilient, Healthy Watersheds

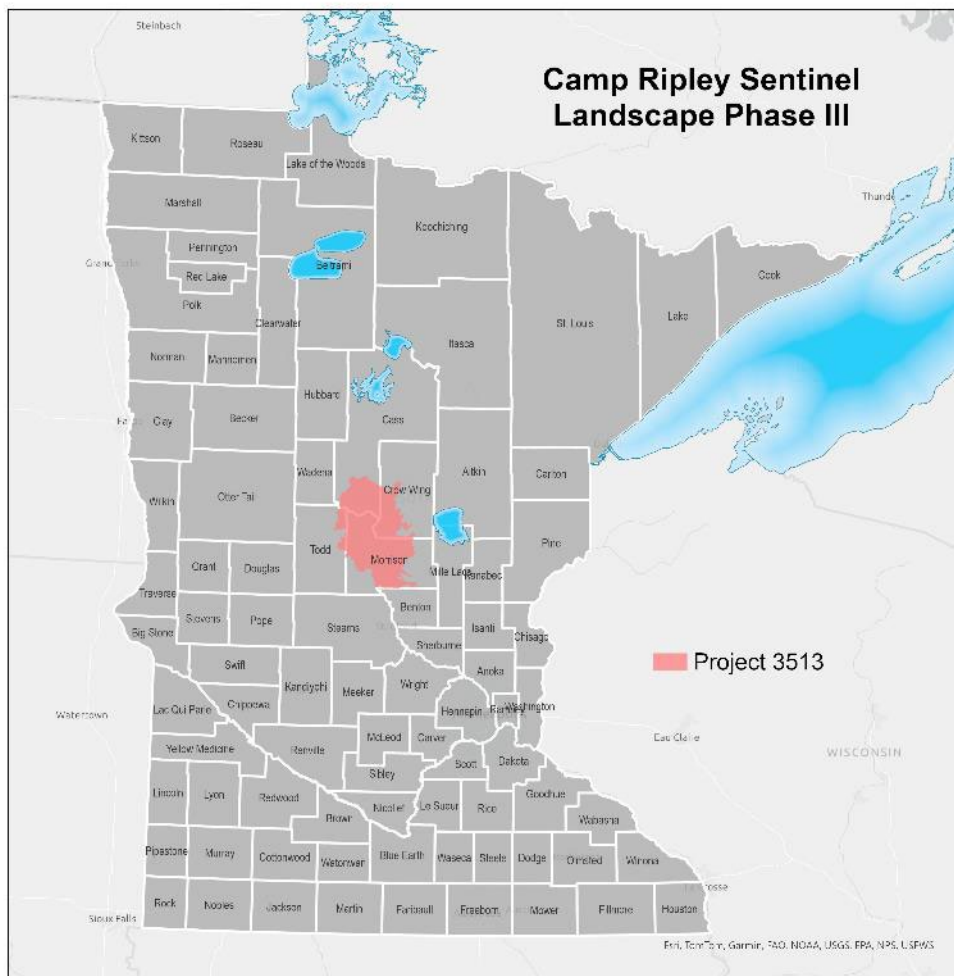
- AFA
- \$16M available for producers to create more water storage, to reduce flooding and improve water quality.



## **4210 – American Farmland Trust: Minnesota Farmland Protection Project: Bridging the Gap Between Landowners and Emerging Farmers**

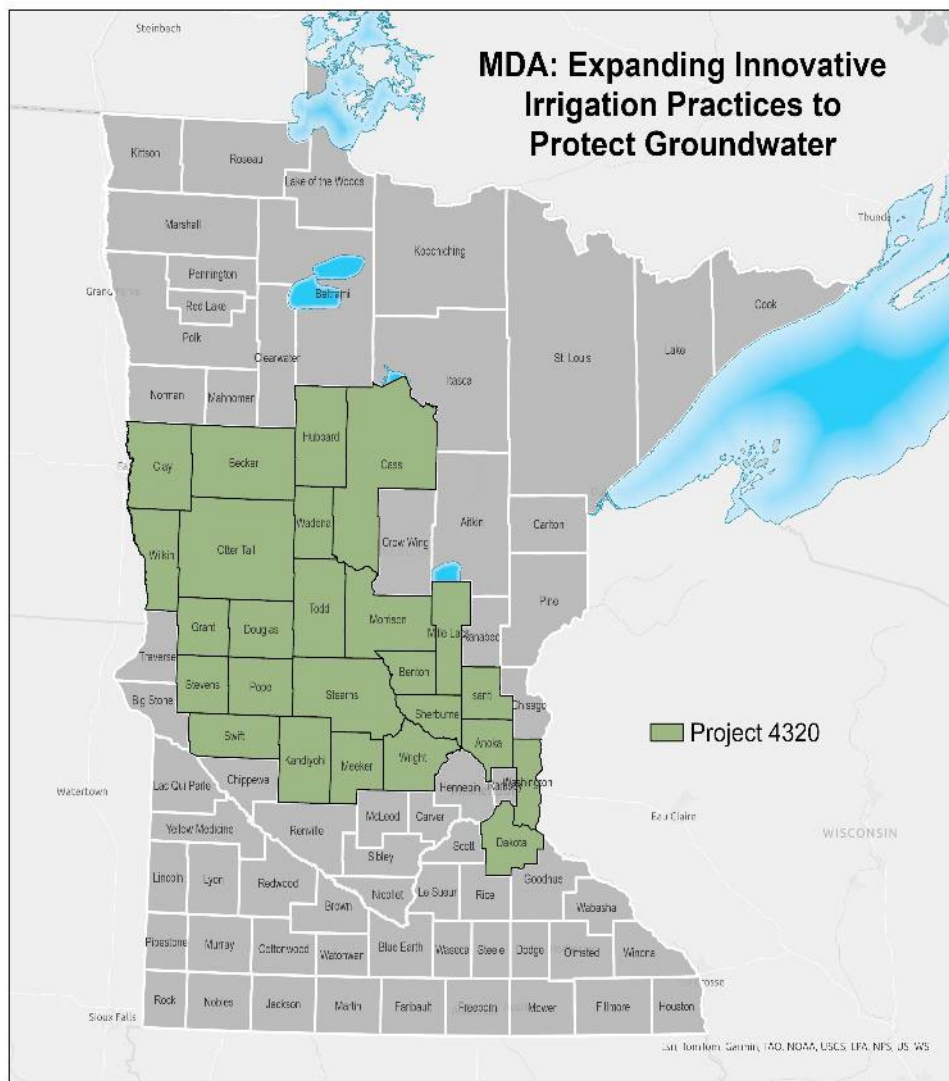
- Classic
- \$7.5M available for agricultural conservation easements. These easements will protect valuable agricultural acres that are at high risk of being converted to urban development, then transition this land into the hands of emerging farms and historically underserved producers.





## 3513 – Morrison SWCD: Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape - Phase 3

- Classic
- \$10M available for producers
- 5 Eligible Counties: Cass, Crow Wing, Morrison and Todd.



## 4320 – MDA (Renewed) : Expanding Innovative Irrigation Practices to Protect Groundwater

- Classic
- Renewed from 2365 project.
- \$8.3M available for producers
- 5 more counties are eligible for the project; Clay, Wilkin, Wright, Anoka and Isanti

# MN included in the following projects

**3097 – Red River Basin Commission** - ND and MN Supply Chain Soil Health Partnership (AFA- ND Lead)

**3290 – Agropur** – Agropur Dairy Producers BMP (AFA – SD Lead; IA, ID, MI, MN, NE, OH, OR, SD and WI)

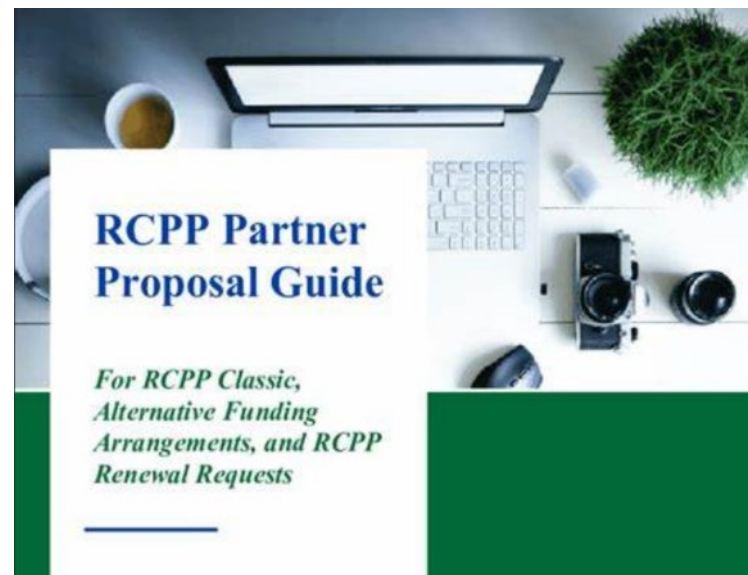
**3535 – American Coalition for Ethanol** - Expanding Soil Health Through Carbon Markets (AFA – SD Lead; IA, IL, IN, KS, MN, MO, NE, OH, SD, and WI)

**4115 – AgOutcomes Inc** – Midwest Greener future (AFA – WI Lead; WI, IL, IA and MN)

# FY2025 Proposals ????????

If announced: How  
much/which funds?

MN will need to prioritize  
projects where partners will  
deliver much or all the  
Technical Assistance.



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# Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) Updates



# FY25- ACEP

## Funds Allocation

- **ACEP WRE General: \$ 1,271,711**

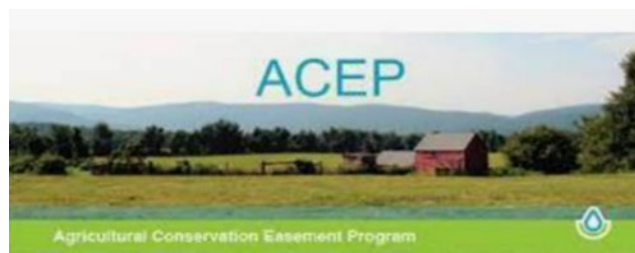
- Expecting to fund 1 application for ~\$1,235,000

- **ACEP Stewardship: \$643,000**

- +\$250,000
- +\$1.7 million – for 5 year burn contract
- Total: ~\$2.6 million

- **ACEP IRA: \$1,085,821**

- If funds get released it will be challenging to complete required due diligence



# MN Existing Easements

Program	Number of Easements	Number of Acres
ACEP-Agriculture Land Easements (ALE)	2	180
ACEP-Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE)	23	2,508
Emergency Watershed Protection Program – Floodplain Easements (EWPP-FPE)	41	5,604
Emergency Wetland Reserve Program (EWRP)	25	2,103
Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP)	62	7,164
Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)	4	215
RCPP-Healthy Forest Reserve Programs (HFRP)	1	429
RCPP-WRE	2	115
Wetland Reserve Program (WRP)	965	115,282
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,125</b>	<b>133,600</b>

# Monitoring Workload

- **Every easement must be monitored every year**
- **25-50% of easements are monitored onsite every year**
- **Partner Assistance:**
  - FY25 - 175 onsites to be completed by PF
  - FY24 -150 onsites completed by PF

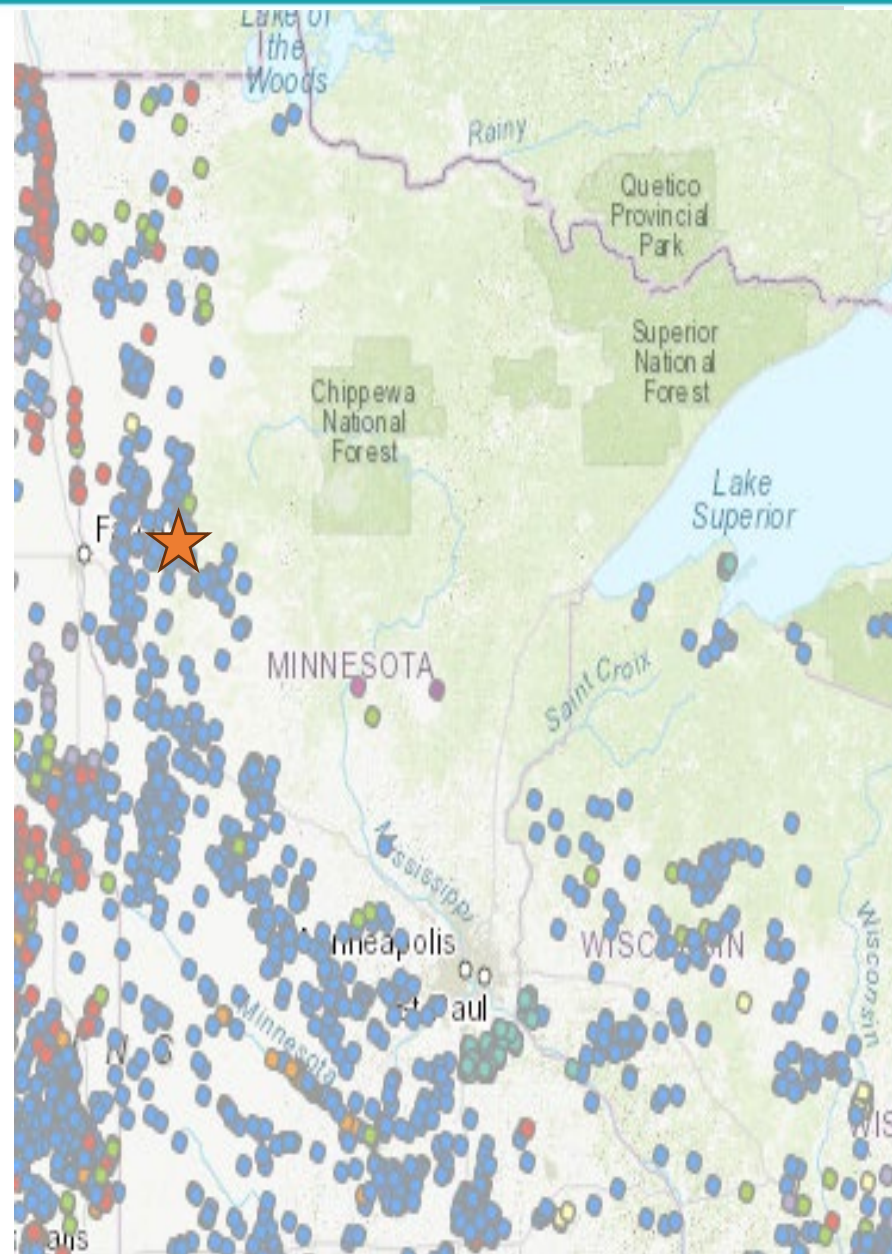
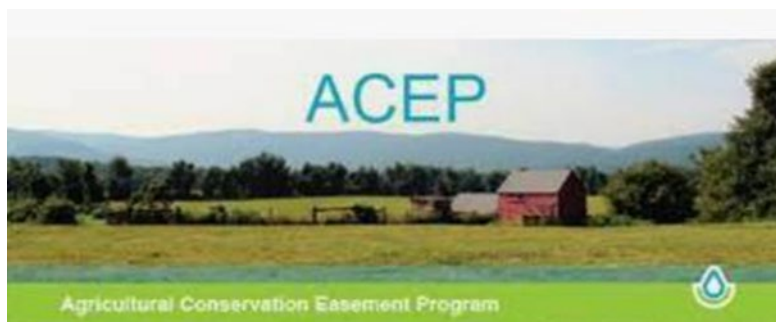


# Easements and Staffing

## Remaining Field Staff in MN:

2 in Fergus Falls

1 part time – Rochester





FY25 Local Working Group (LWG)





Natural Resources Conservation Service  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

🔍 Search



CONSERVATION BASICS

GETTING ASSISTANCE

STATE OFFICES

PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES

RESOURCES

NEWS & EVENTS

## Minnesota Locally Led Conservation and Local Work Groups



<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/state-offices/minnesota/minnesota-locally-led-conservation-and-local-work-groups>

## Local Working Groups Documents

📄 [FY2025 LGW Meetings FY 25 4.16.2025.pdf](#) (321.27 KB)

📄 [MN Local Working Groups Member Application](#) (642.08 KB)

📄 [What is Local Working Groups](#) (125.9 KB)

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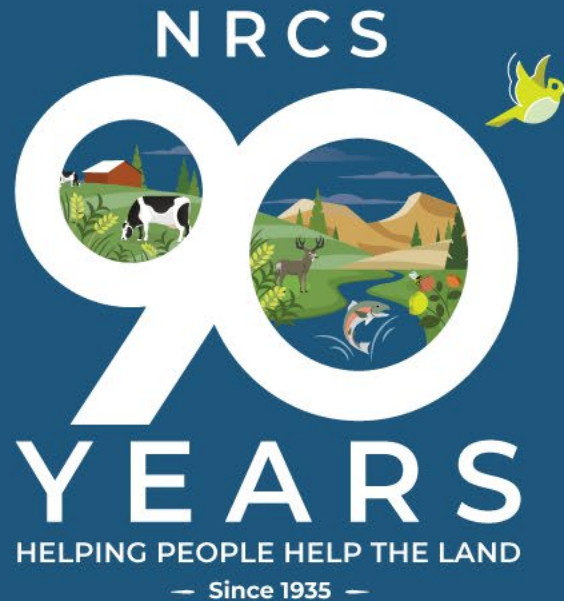


# Farm Bill Updates





# Celebrating 90 Years of SES/ SCS/ NRCS (April 27<sup>th</sup>)



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## Discussion /Questions

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