

Natural Resources Conservation Service Rhode Island



October 2024

RI Forest Health Works RCPP Project

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announces that the [RI Forest Health Works Project](#) is accepting applications for funding for fiscal year 2025. The RI Forest Health Works Project is a [Regional Conservation Partnership Program \(RCPP\)](#) agreement between NRCS, the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) Division of Forest Environment and ten partners. This partnership will leverage over \$3.9M in 5 years to permanently protect over 2,000 acres of critical, privately owned forest lands to combat fragmentation and improve wildlife habitat in Rhode Island.



Program Options

The [RI Forest Health Works Project](#) provides financial and technical assistance to help conserve forest lands and their related benefits through two distinct paths for land protection:

- **Entity-Held Easements** help private and tribal landowners, in partnership with land trusts or other entities like state and local governments, to protect forestlands by placing conservation easements. For help applying, contact Joanne Riccitelli at joanne.riccitelli@gmail.com.
- **U.S.-Held Easements** allow eligible individual landowners to enter into producer contracts with NRCS to place conservation easements on their land to protect critical forestlands. For help applying, contact Samantha Thibault, Conservation Planner, at Samantha.Thibault@usda.gov.

Applications will be ranked according to their contribution to the RCPP project goals of protecting forest land, water quality, and wildlife habitat.

Applying for Assistance

Funding is provided through a competitive process. NRCS accepts applications for its conservation programs year-round but sets state-specific ranking dates to evaluate applications for funding. These dates account for producer needs, staff workload and ensure potential participants have ample opportunity to apply. Interested participants and entities should apply by ranking deadlines, to be considered for funding in current cycles. Applications received after this ranking date will be automatically deferred to the next funding period.

NRCS is a federal agency that works hand-in-hand with conservation districts and the people of Rhode Island to improve and protect soil, water, air, plants, animals and other natural resources. For more information, visit your local NRCS Field Office or www.RI.nrcs.usda.gov.