



## RCPP 2024 PROJECTS

Proposal Title	Lead Partner	Funding Pool	Lead State	Partner States	Project Description
Restoring Alabama's Black Belt Prairie Landscapes	Alabama Soil & Water Conservation Committee	State or Multi-state	AL		The primary goal of this project is to restore and enhance the Black Belt Prairie (BBP) ecosystem to support biodiversity, improve soil carbon sequestration. Improve Terrestria Habitat and Fire Management: NRCS conservation practices will be used to remove woody encroachment, treat invasive species, and reintroduce fire which will re- germinate the native seedbank.
AR-LA CDN Open Pine Landscape Restoration #2	American Bird Conservancy	State or Multi-state	AR	LA	AR-LA Open Pine Landscape Restoration #2 project will greatly improve Forest Health for Wildlife Resources in the West-Gulf Coastal Plain; it will connect and build upon ABC's successful programs in other landscapes across the U.S. The LMVJV Conservation Delivery Network will deliver this project to advance the recovery of species of conservation concern through use of our DFC management practices for Open Pine habitat. Implementation of integrated vegetation management treatments on corridors connecting public and private lands will more than double our conservation impact, linking private lands conservation into a restored landscape for the next 10-20 years.
Sky Island Region Land Management & Protection	Arizona Association of Conservation Districts	State or Multi-state	AZ		The goal of the project is to deliver funding for two agricultural conservation easements while addressing resource concerns related to drought, wildfire, and climate uncertainty. This project will enhance the long-term viability of the nation's food supply by preventing the conversion of productive working lands to non-agricultural uses. The results include increased protection of biodiversity via the permanent protection of over 2,000 acres of historic ranchland and open space, additional distribution of water sources, and fuel break acreage.
Restoring Arizona's Colorado River Basin Conservation Area (RACRBCA)	Pheasants Forever, Inc. and Quail Forever	Critical Conservation Area	AZ		The Arizona Association of Conservation Districts and multiple other partners will work with AZ livestock producers to restore native plant communities by removing invasive woody species to enhance habitat for wildlife, improve wildlife connectivity, reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire, increase resilience to extreme weather events, protect soils, and improve water quality and hydrology within the Colorado River Basin. This landscape-level project covering approximately 35,000 acres of range and forest.
Middle Gunnison Partnership for Resilient Working Lands	Colorado West Land Trust	Critical Conservation Area	CO		The Colorado West Land Trust (CWLTL) and its partners will address priority resource concerns in the Colorado River Basin Critical Conservation Area, including insufficient water/drought, inadequate habitat, water quality degradation, and soil quality degradation by the conversion of ranchland and farmland, restoration of wetlands and riparian areas, improvement of soil health, and enhancement of critical wildlife habitat. The project objectives include the permanent protection of working lands and critical water rights, reconnection of floodplains, improvement of soil health, and reduction of forest fire risk. These objectives will be met through the implementation of conservation easements and land management activities, such as riparian restoration, grazing management, and forest treatments.
Florida's Big Bend	Tall Timbers Research, Inc.	Critical Conservation Area	FL		Upland forests in Florida's Big Bend have declined over decades of altered fire regimes or land conversion. Fire exclusion or insufficient frequency or intensity of applied prescribed fire has allowed encroachment of hardwoods and invasive species. Implementing brush management, herbaceous weed control, prescribed fire, and forest stand improvement conservation practices will restore the health of fire- dependent forests and improve habitat for many at-risk wildlife species, such as Bachman's sparrow, gopher tortoise and northern bobwhite.

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West Georgia Conservation Corridors	US Endowment for Forestry and Communities	State or Multi-state	GA		The overall goal of the West Georgia Conservation Corridors project is to prevent at-risk plant and animal species from becoming listed under the federal Endangered Species Act as threatened or endangered. To ensure habitat protection, the proposal requests \$25 million in RCPP funds for a combination of U.S.-held and entity-held permanent conservation easements.
Restoring Hawaii's Forests for Rare Species Protection and Climate Resilience	Hawaii Division of Forestry and Wildlife	State or Multi-state	HI		Project to enhance climate resilience and preserve the outstanding biodiversity of Hawaii through forest restoration. Project sites will target areas with highest potential to provide habitat for rare species.
Southwest Idaho Forest Fund	National Forest Foundation	State or Multi-state	ID		Project to help Idaho non-industrial private forest operators reduce hazardous fuels across 10,000 acres or more high fire risk private forestland. In addition to reduced fire risk the project intends to reduce risks to surface drinking water quality and utility infrastructure and retain carbon storage capacity.
Lower South Fork Clearwater River Habitat Restoration	Nez Perce Tribe	Critical Conservation Area	ID		This project seeks to improve 1) inadequate habitat for fish, wildlife, and invertebrates and 2) water quality degradation in the South Fork Clearwater River watershed by implementing restorative actions on two- miles of mainstem river corridor, addressing two of the three priority resource concerns of the Western Waters CCA in which this project falls. This lower reach of the river falls within the Nez Perce Tribe reservation boundary. The river needs repair to stop concentrated erosion, increase terrestrial and aquatic species habitat, reconnect the river to its floodplain, and improve riparian area functions. The project will incorporate floodplain connection to restore hydrology (643), large wood and boulder placement for habitat complexity (580, 584), and create aquatic and terrestrial habitat with native vegetation (326, 342, 391, 390, 612).
CLF RCPP/REPI Fort Campbell Partnership	Compatible Lands Foundation	Critical Conservation Area	KY		Compatible Lands Foundations and its military partner, Fort Campbell, will partner with the Natural Resources Conservation Service to use Regional Conservation Partnership Program funding to purchase both working land and non-working land easements to prevent loss of working lands, habitat, and/or open space and to address incompatible development impacting the military mission. This includes protection of natural areas, wildlife habitat, and regional water quality as compatible with working lands in the Mississippi River Basin critical conservation area.
Soil Health for Urban and Rural Environments	Grow Appalachia/ Berea College	State or Multi-state	KY		Grow Appalachia will anticipate the following outcomes. Project success will be measured by: Producers and landowners have conservation tools and resources to implement conservation practices on their farms Measure by: Number of cost share contracts obligated in conservation practices; understand the process to engage with USDA agencies and resources. It is expected that NRCS will complete the application and contracting with producers and Landowners for this project. These contracts will incorporate conservation, weather resilient practices, and guidance on implementation of soil health activities in urban and rural spaces.
Resilient Infrastructure & Free Flowing Streams (RIFFLS)	The Nature Conservancy – Maine	Critical Conservation Area	ME		The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) Resilient Infrastructure & Free Flowing Streams (RIFFLS) RCPP will improve aquatic organism passage (AOP) for native fish and wildlife species throughout Maine by upgrading road- stream crossings and other means of improved fish passage. Habitat fragmentation caused by AOP barriers is the most critical direct threat to Endangered Atlantic salmon, Eastern brook trout, other diadromous and native fish, and protected wildlife species including mussels and turtles.

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Restoring Climate-Resilient Longleaf Pine Forests in Mississippi	National Fish and Wildlife Foundation	Critical Conservation Area	MS		Engaging private landowners to increase restoration, conservation and proper maintenance of the longleaf pine ecosystem requires a multifaceted approach to address the diverse objectives of different ownerships. The goals for this project are to engage 1,000 private landowners to restore or enhance 50,000 acres of longleaf pine on private land in Mississippi over five years. Forestation/afforestation: Project will coordinate with and leverage a network of implementation partners to provide technical and financial assistance to private landowners to plant (tree-shrub site preparation and establishment) and sustainably manage (forest stand improvement) longleaf pine on suitable sites.
Montana Grasslands and Wildlife Corridors	Pheasants Forever, Inc. and Quail Forever	Critical Conservation Area	MT		Through the Montana Grasslands and Wildlife Corridors (MT GWC) Project we aim to address threats to grasslands across Montana to anchor intact landscapes, improve wildlife habitat, maintain wildlife migration corridors, sequester carbon, keep grass-based agriculture profitable and sustainable, and ensure Montana's grasslands are vibrant. Utilizing an impressive partnership framework, we will strive to impact 120,000 acres of grasslands by removing/modifying 200 miles of fence to facilitate wildlife movement, seeding 5,000 acres of grass, contracting management improvements on 10,000 acres, and establishing reliable livestock water on 100,000 acres of grasslands. Additionally, we expect to utilize land rental contracts to address barriers to grassland restorations, leverage partnerships, and keep restoration projects intact for a minimum of 10 years on 30,000 acres.
The Land of the Pines: Protecting Critical Conservation Areas and Working Lands in the Lumber River Watershed	North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services	Critical Conservation Area	NC		This proposal seeks to leverage state funds with federal dollars to protect working lands in the Lumber River Basin. Through this partnership project, the North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Sciences (NCDA&CS) requests \$10 million to fund conservation easements in critical areas within the Lumber River Basin.
Growing and Expanding Nebraska's Grassland Cores	Nebraska Community Foundation	Critical Conservation Area	NE		Prairie Grassland Region project focused on sustainable treatment of woody encroachment through a combination of brush management and follow-up treatments of Prescribed Fire (RX Fire) and/or Integrated Pest Management to treat reinfestation. This biome scale grassland management effort aims to improve forage production and wildlife benefits and maximize carbon storage to help address climate change.
Improving Water Quality and Climate Resiliency in NH through Ecosystem Restoration	Connecticut River Conservancy	Critical Conservation Area	NH		The goal of this effort is to restore degraded stream and forest ecosystems in parts of NH, which will in turn improve water quality, ecosystem health, and climate resiliency. These will directly address all three concerns in the Northeast Forest and Waters CCA by improving degraded plant conditions in forests and riparian zones, enhancing in- stream and riparian habitat, and restoring areas presently contributing to water quality degradation. The proposed activities will also prevent nitrogen losses to waterways.
Tribal Buffalo Restoration in the Southwest Region	InterTribal Buffalo Council	State or Multi-state	NM	AZ, CO, UT	Project to restore and manage native grasslands ecosystems utilizing buffalo and conservation practices on lands within 83-member tribal nations within the four-state project area (UT, AZ, CO, and NM). Project goals include restoration of cultural and spiritual practices, improve soil health and increase environmental resiliency.
Tribal Buffalo Restoration in the Southeast Region	InterTribal Buffalo Council	State or Multi-state	OK		Project to restore and manage native grasslands ecosystems utilizing buffalo and conservation practices on lands within 22-member tribal nations within the four-state project area (OK, FL, KS & NE). Project goals include restoration of cultural and spiritual practices, improve soil health and increase environmental resiliency.

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Pilot Butte Canal King Way Irrigation Modernization & Conservation	Deschutes River Conservancy	Critical Conservation Area	OR		<p>This project employs all the strategies developed as part of the Basin Study—district canal piping, private lateral piping, on-farm efficiencies, and water marketing—to save water in Central Oregon Irrigation District (COID or District), which will be redirected to North Unit Irrigation District (NUID) in exchange for using stored water from Wickiup Reservoir to manage flows in the Upper Deschutes to benefit the river and aquatic species. Water savings generated through the RCPP projects will contribute directly to basin-wide goals of increasing flows in the Upper Deschutes to benefit ESA-listed OSF and native redband trout.</p> <p>Under the HCP, the districts have committed to increase flows from 100 to 300 cfs by 2028, and to 400–500 cfs by 2033. The projects in this RCPP are an integral component of meeting these flow goals. Under this proposed RCPP, the partners will complete the piping of the next phase of PBC—the King Way Section—immediately adjacent to the existing piped section (public works/watershed activities). Piping the King Way Section of the PBC will save approximately 12 cubic feet per second, contributing 3,900 acre- feet to Upper Deschutes flows, improving source water depletion and aquatic habitat. Additionally, the partners will pipe privately owned laterals and incentivize companion on-farm projects (land management activities), on adjacent private lands to connect landowners to the completed piping and optimize water and energy conservation opportunities.</p>
Tribal Buffalo Restoration in the Northern Great Plains Region	InterTribal Buffalo Council	State or Multi-state	SD		Project to restore and manage native grasslands ecosystems utilizing buffalo and conservation practices on lands within 21-member tribal nations within the four-state project area (SD, MT, ND & WY). Project goals include restoration of cultural and spiritual practices, improve soil health and increase environmental resiliency.
SD	The Nature Conservancy	State or Multi-state	SD		The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) goal for this project is to protect large uninterrupted spans of quality grasslands necessary to support current populations of wildlife, store carbon, and increase the resiliency of South Dakota's ranching community. We are requesting \$22,088,329 in RCPP funding leveraged with \$19.66 million in landowner and partner contributions to perpetually protect approximately 20,000 acres of priority grasslands in western South Dakota using entity-held conservation easements.
MidSouth Regional Conservation Partnership Program	MidSouth Development District	State or Multi-state	TN	AR, MS	The project aims to enhance ecosystem health by establishing diverse habitats on the edges of production sites across six counties, supporting ecosystem services that reduce synthetic inputs and improve water and soil quality. This approach will increase biodiversity, providing natural pest control and pollination, thereby promoting sustainable agriculture.
Promoting Landscape Resilience and Protecting Migration Corridors in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem	Jackson Hole Land Trust	State or Multi-state	WY		The GYE is also home to a vibrant agricultural community, dominated by farms and ranches that are a critical part of big game migratory corridors. These private lands are under threat of development as farms and ranches are parceled off to meet the demands of a regionally growing population. The primary goal of “Promoting Landscape Resilience and Protecting Migration Corridors in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem” is to protect and enhance the critical lands in Northwest Wyoming that sequester carbon, support the region's iconic ungulate species, and support the agricultural economies of the area.