



Natural Resources Conservation Service

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NEWS RELEASE

Tennessee NRCS Now Accepting Applications for Two RCPP Partnership Projects Aimed at Improving Water Quality Sign-up Deadline is January 20, 2017

NASHVILLE, December 1, 2016 – The United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) recently announced the application deadline to sign up for funding to improve water quality and to provide other conservation benefits in two partnership project areas in Tennessee.

Funding is available through NRCS's innovative Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) and applicants must be within the focus area of the respective project. **The deadline to submit applications is January 20, 2017.**

"The Regional Conservation Partnership Program puts local partners in the driver's seat to accomplish environmental goals that are most meaningful to that community," said Kevin Brown, Tennessee NRCS State Conservationist. *"It draws on local knowledge and networks to fuel conservation projects, bringing together a wide variety of new partners including businesses, universities, non-profits, and local governments."*

One RCPP project—**The Upper Clinch-Powell River Watershed**—is located in the Appalachian Mountains of Virginia and Tennessee and is a leading national hotspot for biodiversity and imperiled species sustaining over 40 varieties of rare mussels and supporting at least 129 native types of fish.

A total of **nearly \$4.57 million** will be invested in the partnership between NRCS, The Nature Conservancy-Clinch Valley Program, and the states of Tennessee and Virginia—whereby Virginia is the lead state. The project is designed to improve water quality and aquatic habitat through a local working group whose task is to identify resources and prioritize best management practices (bmp), design a GIS-based ranking system for project investments, implement agricultural and mining BMPs in biologically critical areas, and assess the positive impacts of BMPs on water quality. Applicants must be in Claiborne, Hancock, or Hawkins County and meet eligibility requirements to be eligible to receive financial assistance for water quality and wildlife habitat improvement.

The **West Tennessee Floodplain and Wetland Restoration** is another RCPP project in which NRCS will invest **\$1.87 million** to fund a partnership with West Tennessee River Basin Authority. The goal of this project is to measurably improve the water quality and ecological integrity of the identified watersheds through implementation of NRCS soil health initiative practices, grade stabilization structures, riparian forest buffer, sediment basins, wetland enhancement, and wetland restoration. Conservation projects within ten watersheds in Chester, Hardeman, Hardin, Henderson, and McNairy counties are eligible to receive assistance.

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Interested parties in any of these Northwest Tennessee counties should sign up at their local USDA Service Center. For more information on applying, visit the [Tennessee NRCS website](#).

USDA NRCS helps America's farmers and ranchers conserve the Nation's soil, water, air and other natural resources. All programs are voluntary and offer science-based solutions that benefit both the landowner and the environment.

To learn about technical and financial assistance available through conservation programs, visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/GetStarted or your local USDA service center.

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“Voluntary Conservation Works!”