



## Tennessee NWQI: Overview

Through the National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI), the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is offering financial and technical assistance to producers interested in improving water quality and aquatic habitats in priority watersheds with impaired streams.

NRCS will help producers implement conservation and management practices through a systems approach to control and trap runoff. Qualified producers will receive assistance for installing conservation practices such as cover crops, filter strips and terraces.

For over 75 years, NRCS has provided agricultural producers with assistance to implement voluntary conservation practices that protect natural resources while maintaining production and profits.



## Tennessee Priority Watersheds

Tennessee has two watershed areas approved to receive assistance through the National Water Quality Initiative. They are:

- Muddy Fork in Washington County
- Big Limestone Creek in Washington and Greene counties

These watersheds are located in eastern Tennessee (see map on back).

These watersheds are listed as "impaired water

bodies" in Tennessee, mainly due to sediment, nutrients, and pathogens entering into the watershed.

The National Water Quality Initiative will work with landowners in the watershed project areas to install conservation practices that will help control runoff, which will help improve surface water quality.

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*The National Water Quality Initiative will work in selected watersheds to help farmers improve water quality and aquatic habitats in impaired streams.*

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## Partnerships

NRCS identified these priority watersheds through the help of local partnerships and state water quality agencies.

Partners sometimes offer financial assistance in addition to NRCS programs. NRCS will continue to coordinate with local and state agencies, natural resources districts, nongovernmental organizations and others to implement this initiative.

This strategic approach will leverage funds and provide streamlined assistance to help individual agricultural producers take needed actions to reduce the flow of sediment, nutrients and other runoff into impaired waterways.

In Tennessee, NRCS has a strong conservation partnership in place that has been working on water quality improvement projects for decades.

Partnerships with the Soil Conservation Districts, the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, Tennessee Department of Agriculture, The Nature Conservancy, Tennessee Division of Forestry, and a host of others have helped NRCS assist more landowners with installing conservation practices that help improve water quality.

## Producer Benefits

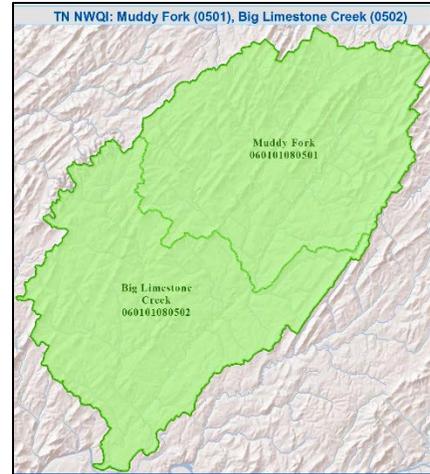
Water quality conservation practices benefit agricultural producers by lowering input costs and enhancing the productivity of working lands.

Conservation investments are good for all Americans, because well-managed farms limit pollution from runoff, produce food and fiber, sustain rural economies, and provide food security to the Nation. All across the country farmers, ranchers and forest landowners are voluntarily taking action and putting conservation on the ground to improve water quality on millions of acres!

## Public Benefits

NRCS is proud to be involved in a nationwide effort with landowners and communities to improve and protect our water resources.

The landowners and farmers participating in the initiative will receive conservation payments to work on the land in a sustainable way which provides cleaner water. In addition to the financial assistance, the land will remain productive into the future. Communities benefit by having clean waterways, safer drinking water, and healthy habitat for fish and wildlife.



## How to Apply

To get started, make an appointment at your local U.S. Department of Agriculture Service Center. You will need to establish eligibility and farm records for your land.

NRCS will help you complete an application while explaining which conservation practices are available in your watershed.

Remember to check with your local NRCS office to see if you are located in a selected watershed.

In Tennessee, underserved, socially disadvantaged, limited resource, and beginning farmers and ranchers will receive a higher payment rate for conservation practices related to the NWQI healthy habitat for fish and wildlife.