NRCS 2017 Conservation Innovation Grants
Project Fact Sheet

Lead Organization Name: Trout Unlimited
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Website Address: n/a
Duration of Project: One year

Project Title:
The Liquid Assets Project: Mobilizing Impact Investment Capital for Agricultural Water Sustainability

Project in a Sentence:
The Liquid Assets Project will support the origination, design, review and financing of investments in sustainable agricultural and ranching operations that will deliver financial, social and environmental returns for producers and investors through the creation of an Agricultural and Ranchland Investment Fund.

Project Elevator Pitch:
The goal of the Liquid Assets Project is to identify, develop and finance a pipeline of pilot sustainable agricultural and ranchland investments that will demonstrate how private investment capital can be used to generate a combination of environmental, social and investment returns. Through this project, Trout Unlimited and its project partners will provide investment capital through the creation of an Agricultural and Ranchland Investment Fund for ranchers to convert to sustainable ranching practices and for farmers to improve water use through crop switching or irrigation system improvements. The projects will target both water savings and increased agricultural profitability that can enable farmers and ranchers to stay on the land with a higher rate of return for their operations, provide financial returns to investors, improve stream flows, and enhance grassland conditions and ecosystem health.
Deliverables:

1. Within the first six months of the grant, complete desktop diligence on 31 potential agricultural or ranchland investment opportunities, and field-level analysis on 11 potential investment opportunities.

2. Within the first six months of the grant, hold meetings with at least 5 potential anchor investors for an Agricultural and Ranchland Investment Fund.

3. By the end of the grant, complete desktop diligence on an additional 31 potential agricultural or ranchland investment opportunities and field-level analysis on an additional 11 potential investment opportunities.

4. By the end of the grant, hold meetings with an additional 5 potential anchor investors for an Agricultural and Ranchland Investment Fund.

5. Close on at least one investigated investment opportunity before the end of the grant period.

6. By the end of the grant, complete a public report discussing the Liquid Assets Project’s experience in developing water-focused impact investment.

How We Are Advancing Conservation Finance:

The Liquid Assets Project is developing a partnership among agricultural producers, non-profit conservation organizations, and impact investors to create a new Agricultural and Ranchland Investment Fund. We will be designing and piloting approaches to using private impact-focused finance to help farmers maintain profitability and stay on the land while saving water and providing other environmental benefits. By demonstrating and promoting replication of these approaches, the Liquid Assets Project will help advance conservation finance tools that expand sustainable agriculture and water solutions across the country.