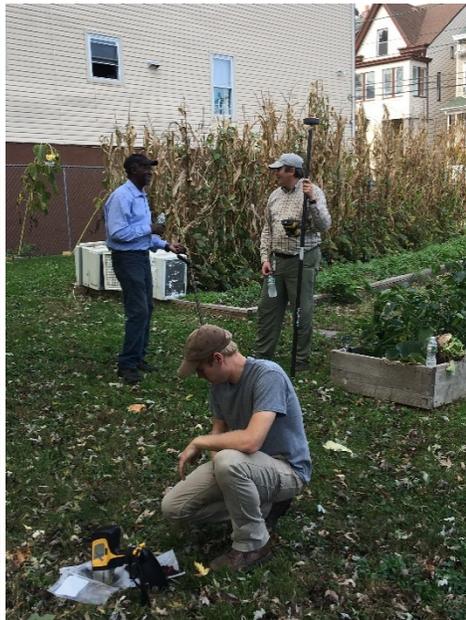




United States Department of Agriculture



# Conservation Accomplishments New Jersey – FY2017 Carrie Lindig, State Conservationist



New Jersey



Helping People Help the Land

Natural  
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## FY2017 in New Jersey

### A Message from our State Conservationist

It is difficult to quantify just how much benefit the 2014 Farm Bill brought to New Jersey agricultural producers and landowners. Since 2014, the Bill's provisions in the Conservation programs alone have supplied 67.3 million dollars to our state. These funds are provided directly to farmers, ranchers and private forestland owners to make improvements to their land and help reduce off-site impacts to neighbors. Whether it is through the protection of a farmland preservation easement – through which we are protecting 2,476 acres since 2014 – or by planting multi-species cover crops three years in a row to rebuild organic matter – many agricultural acres are in better shape for the future.

In 2017, 14.7 million dollars were distributed not only to individuals across the state, but also through targeted efforts, like the focus on the Delaware watershed supported through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), the aquaculture initiative, Golden-winged Warbler and Bobwhite quail protection through Working Lands for Wildlife, and support for underserved and beginning farmers.

Looking ahead to 2018, the Farm Bill will be revised and reauthorized, and our hope is that New Jersey farmers and ranchers will continue to benefit from the opportunities available to enhance their land for production and sustainability.

---Carrie Lindig



### Preserving farmland for future generations

NRCS's Agricultural Conservation Easements Program (ACEP) is being utilized by many New Jersey residents to help protect prime farmland, grassland and wetlands in New Jersey. ACEP is comprised of two components: the agricultural land easement (ALE) and wetland reserve easement (WRE). Easement activities that were funded in FY2017 accounted for nearly 34% of the Program funds obligated in the fiscal year.

Seven cooperative agreements through ACEP-ALE were established with six partners in FY2017 to fund agricultural land easements on twenty-two parcels. NRCS was able to fund four cooperative agreements with FY 2017 funds, totaling \$3,169,802. Funding for the additional three ACEP-ALE agreements will be processed in FY2018.

In addition, NRCS also closed on easements approved in prior years. Five agreements established through the Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program will protect 493 acres of farm land. Two ACEP-WRE agreements established with prior year funding will keep over 64 acres of wetlands functioning to provide habitat for many species of wildlife, filter nutrients from runoff, and help slow overland flows that can prevent down-stream flooding and reduce soil erosion.



### NRCS Soil Scientists reach milestone in service to urban communities in 2017

#### Technical Soil Service delivered to 100th site



In April 2012 NRCS soil scientists took their newly-acquired portable X-ray fluorescence (PXRF) technology to a community garden in New Brunswick, NJ, to screen the soil there for lead and other potentially hazardous metals. Five years later, with a screening at the site of a potential community garden in Trenton, NJ, the team completed this type of screening at the 100<sup>th</sup> site.

PXRF is ideal for assessing spatial variability of metals, a common condition in urban soils. NRCS New Jersey soil scientists have conducted soils investigations for community and school gardens, as well as urban and suburban farms, in 19 of New Jersey's 21 counties and three New York City boroughs. About 40% of the sites they have visited were found to have potential trace metal problems. For the organizations that manage these sites, this is vital information that helps them take appropriate actions to ensure the healthy and safe production of food crops.



## NJ NRCS Funding in FY2017

New Jersey landowners received the benefit of \$10.2 million in conservation funding in Fiscal Year 2017.

Conservation Program	Acres Treated	Financial Assistance Obligation
Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA)	94	\$213,826
Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)	3,941	\$97,678
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)	17,631	\$5,293,212
Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP-EQIP)	2,124	\$1,155,277
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>\$6,759,993</b>

Top 10 Conservation Practices in New Jersey by dollars invested in FY2017 (Financial Assistance)



1. Cover Crop
2. Sprinkler System
3. Irrigation Pipeline
4. Forest Stand Improvement
5. Fence
6. Brush Management
7. Heavy Use Area Protection
8. Forest Management Plan - Written
9. Irrigation Water Management
10. Tree/Shrub Establishment

Easement Program	Financial Assistance Obligation
<b>Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) (three components)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wetland Reserve Easement (ACEP-WRE)</li> <li>• Agricultural Land Easement (ACEP-ALE)</li> <li>• Agricultural Land Easement Grassland (ACEP-ALE)</li> </ul>	\$3,169,802
<b>Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program (FRPP)</b>	\$4,275
<b>Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)</b>	\$222,598
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$3,517,154</b>

## Now we understand the importance of testing our soils...



The Center for Environmental Transformation (CFET) is among the groups the NRCS soils staff has served. This non-profit is working in Camden, NJ, a city with an EPA-Environmental Justice designation. "We are so thankful that NRCS came to our garden and tested our soils," Teresa Niedda, CFET Executive Director says. "Now we understand the importance of testing your soils, and we can help others with what we learned through the process."

NRCS State Soil Scientist Rich Shaw says, "Working with underserved customers that are unfamiliar with our agency is one of the most rewarding services we get to provide."

## Looking Ahead to FY18



### Locally Led Conservation

The farmers and stakeholders - over 130 of them - who attended the four Local Work Group sessions held in FY2017 provided information that NRCS is using to help us shape our program delivery going forward. We'll be following up on the suggestions we received, and we're planning more Local Work Group meetings for 2018!



### Working with our partners

NRCS believes in the value of cooperative conservation. Working together we are better able to identify and prioritize resource needs, share technical expertise, and augment financial support for conservation. Some of the ways we work with our partners in New Jersey include:

- **The NJ Conservation Partnership**  
USDA-NRCS partners with NJ Association of Conservation Districts, New Jersey's 15 Soil Conservation Districts, NJ Department of Agriculture, State Soil Conservation Committee and Rutgers Cooperative Research and Extension Service
- **State Technical Committee**  
This Committee provides recommendations for establishing technical guidelines and program criteria and priorities necessary to carry out conservation provisions of the Farm Bill
- **Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)**  
RCPP promotes coordination between NRCS and its partners to deliver conservation assistance to producers and landowners
- **Partner employees**  
NRCS works with partner organizations to increase staff resources

**Call on your NRCS conservation professionals.**

**They are here to help you help your land in New Jersey!**

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