



Supporting Working Lands in Colorado

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides technical and financial assistance to help agricultural producers and others care for the land. The assistance provided is based on an understanding that the land – the landscape as a whole – must be the focus of conservation. Using this comprehensive approach, the people helped are able to help the land function as a living, sustainable system that provides a high standard of living and a quality of life for today and for future generations. The NRCS does much of its work through conservation programs associated with the 2014 Farm Bill.

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) provides financial and technical assistance to help landowners conserve agricultural lands and wetlands and their related benefits. *Under the Agricultural Land Easements component of the ACEP program*, NRCS helps Indian tribes, state and local governments, and non-governmental organizations protect working agricultural lands and limit non-agricultural uses of the land. *Under the Wetlands Reserve Easements component*, NRCS helps to restore, protect, and enhance enrolled wetlands. Through ACEP, over the past decade **NRCS Colorado has helped protect 33 family operations covering over 100,000 acres (about 157 square miles or just over 75,000 football fields) of prime farm and ranch lands.** From 2014-2017 NRCS invested **\$28 million.**

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

CSP encourages producers to address resource concerns in a comprehensive manner by undertaking additional conservation activities while improving, maintaining, and managing any existing conservation measures and activities. From **2014 -2017 NRCS Colorado invested \$64 million through CSP totaling 2.8 MILLION acres, the equivalent of the ENTIRE state of Delaware, the Grand Canyon, and Sedgwick County.**



Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA)

Some landowners and natural resource stakeholders partner with NRCS seeking only the Agency's technical expertise and assistance. NRCS works with those entities through the CTA program. CTA is not a Farm Bill program but it helps the Agency provide land users assistance and opportunities to address concerns, and problems related to the use of natural resources e.g., help conduct resource assessments, develop practice designs, establish resource monitoring, or follow-up on installed practices. One of the most popular tools the Agency provides through CTA is the development of a conservation plan. **From 2014-2017,**

NRCS Colorado provided assistance on nearly 3,000 projects, totaling 3 million acres, the equivalent of nearly 3 Grand Canyons.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

EQIP is NRCS' largest and most flexible conservation program. Through EQIP, landowners receive financial and technical assistance to implement structural and management conservation practices that optimize environmental benefits on working agricultural land. NRCS Colorado offers a variety of opportunities to receive EQIP funding including targeting resource concerns and specific customer demographics, as well as allocations based on the State's 10 geopolitical watershed boundaries.

EQIP Funding Opportunities:

- ✓ Air Quality Initiative
- ✓ Beginning & Socially Disadvantaged Farmer/Rancher
- ✓ Colorado River Salinity Program
- ✓ Confined Livestock & Manure Management
- ✓ Conservation Activity Plan
- ✓ Forest Health
- ✓ Grazing Land Operations
- ✓ High Tunnels
- ✓ National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI)
- ✓ Ogallala Aquifer Initiative (OAI)
- ✓ Farm Energy
- ✓ Organic Initiative
- ✓ Soil Health
- ✓ Strikeforce
- ✓ Water Quality & Quantity
- ✓ Wildlife Habitat
- ✓ Working Lands For Wildlife (WLFW) Initiatives:
 - Cutthroat Trout
 - Lesser Prairie Chicken
 - Sage Grouse
 - Southwestern Willow Flycatcher

From 2014-2017, NRCS Colorado provided assistance on over 3500 projects, invested \$156M on 1.8 MILLION acres.

For more information, please visit:
www.co.nrcs.usda.gov