



New Jersey NRCS FY 2018 Accomplishments



**THE USDA NATURAL RESOURCES
CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS)
PROVIDES INNOVATIVE CONSERVATION
SOLUTIONS TO RESTORE, ENHANCE
AND PROTECT NEW JERSEY’S PRIVATE
WORKING LANDS.**

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in New Jersey strives to use our conservation tools in creative ways to provide positive environmental uplifts on New Jersey’s private working lands. We strive to demonstrate that agricultural productivity is enhanced by good land stewardship and that good land stewardship not only benefits the farm footprint, but has far reaching benefits for the watershed community.

Because we only work with landowners and operators on a voluntary basis, we pride ourselves on developing respectful relationships and providing good customer service. This report attempts to capture New Jersey NRCS’s accomplishments and successes for fiscal year 2018 which covers October 1, 2017, through September 30, 2018.

CARRIE LINDIG, State Conservationist

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A Year in Review - FY2018

Investments on Private Working Lands Conservation Programs

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) - All Initiatives

\$5,421,558 for 245 Contracts

EQIP – National Initiatives

- National Water Quality Initiative - \$465,312, 8 contracts
- Organic Initiative - \$126,122, 10 contracts
- On-Farm Energy Initiative - \$8,362, 3 contracts
- Working Lands for Wildlife
 - Golden Winged Warbler - \$181,418, 7 contracts

EQIP – New Jersey Statewide Initiatives

- Socially Disadvantaged/ Beginning Farmers - \$207,594, 8 contracts
- Soil Health - \$295,079, 6 contracts
- Conservation Activity Plan - \$189,179, 107 contracts
- Bobwhite Quail - \$7,268, 1 contract
- American Black Duck – no contracts in 2018

EQIP – North Jersey Local Work Group Fund Pool

- LWG - \$732,304, 17 contracts
- Livestock - \$703,311, 10 contracts
- Forestry/Wildlife - \$115,481, 9 contracts

EQIP – Central Jersey Local Work Group Fund Pool

- LWG - \$776,908, 24 contracts
- Livestock - \$114,956, 3 contracts
- Forestry - \$27,619, 6 contracts

EQIP – South Jersey Local Work Group Fund Pool

- LWG:- \$1,064,795, 14 contracts
- Livestock - \$373,081, 5 contracts
- Forestry/Wildlife - \$32,775, 7 contracts

Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA)

\$210,487, 11 contracts (cropland)

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

\$11,330, 3 contracts

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

multi-year agreements in progress (See details on page 12.)

- Delaware River - \$286,151, 8 contracts
- Raritan Basin - \$203,591 FA (of \$225,000), 7 contracts
- Whole Farm Systems - \$266,834 (of \$292,400), 6 contracts

Local Work Groups and EQIP Allocations

Local Work Groups are convened by the local Soil Conservation District and the NRCS District Conservationists to help NRCS identify and prioritize the most pressing conservation needs in their area. Needs that can be addressed by USDA conservation programs are considered in the establishment of application and funding criteria.

NRCS sets aside a portion of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program funds allocated to New Jersey to be directed to resource concerns and priorities identified by each local work group.

The North Jersey Local Work Group, Central Jersey Local Work Group, and South Jersey Local Work Group met in the Spring of 2018.

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New Jersey's Local Work Groups Top Three Conservation Needs Identified

North Jersey

- Wildlife management
- Invasive species management/control
- Water/stream quality/nutrient management

Central Jersey

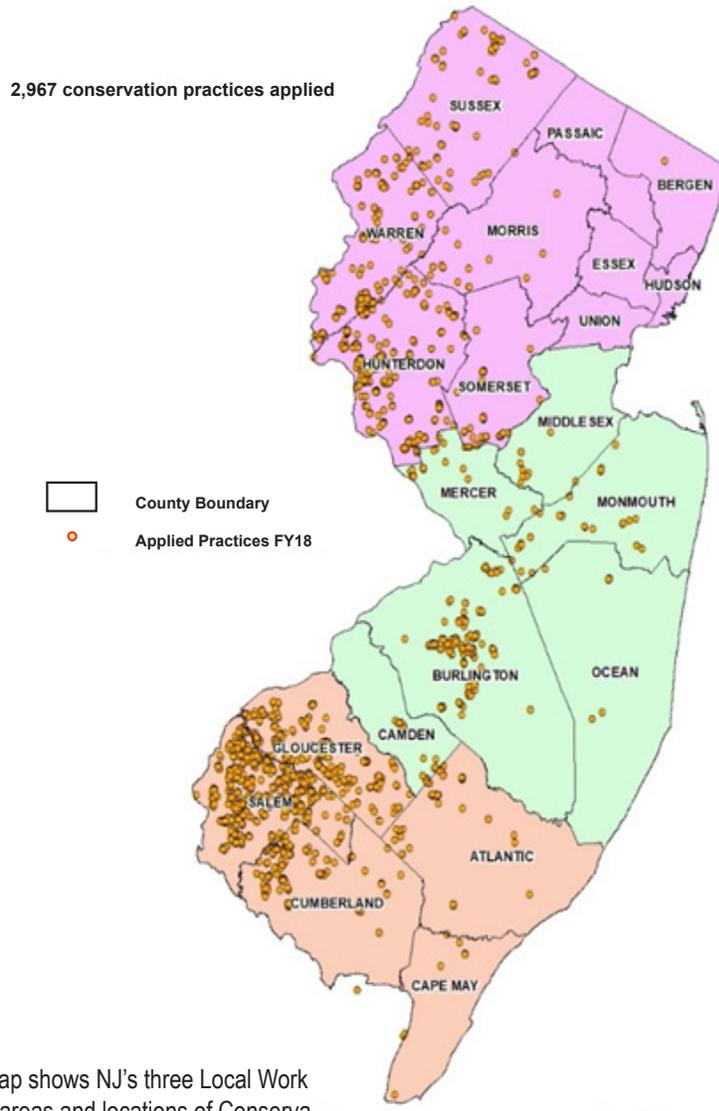
- Water quality
- Soil quality
- Support the shellfish/aquaculture industry

South Jersey

- Soil Quality
- Organic Matter Depletion
- Soil Erosion, Ponding/Flooding

Conservation on the Ground

Applied Practices in Fiscal Year 2018



This map shows NJ's three Local Work Group areas and locations of Conservation Practices Applied on New Jersey's private working lands in FY2018.

The shaded areas show the counties represented by the three Local Work Groups (LWG).

In Fiscal Year 2018, more than 2,950 conservation practices were applied on New Jersey's private lands to help improve soil, air, and water quality, enhance wildlife habitat and preserve land for future generations.

Top Conservation Practices Applied

1. Cover Crop
2. Brush Management
3. Forest Management Plans (written)
4. Forest Stand Improvement
5. Structures for Wildlife
6. Fence
7. Conservation Cover
8. Heavy Use Area Protection
9. Irrigation Water Management
10. Irrigation Pipeline

Top Conservation Practices by Dollars

1. Cover Crop
2. Sprinkler System
3. Stream Habitat Improvement and Management
4. Roofs and Covers
5. Waste Storage Facility
6. Irrigation Pipeline
7. High Tunnel System
8. Irrigation System, Microirrigation
9. Heavy Use Area Protection
10. Forest Stand Improvement

Preserving New Jersey's Working Lands

\$3.3 Million in FY2018

The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program - Agricultural Land Easements (ACEP-ALE) provides financial and technical assistance to help conserve agricultural lands and wetlands and their related benefits. Under the Agricultural Land Easements component, NRCS helps Indian tribes, state and local governments and non-governmental organizations protect working agricultural lands and limit non-agricultural uses of the land.



Grasslands of Special Significance Preserved in Salem County

The New Jersey Conservation Foundation applied for a USDA-NRCS Agricultural Conservation Easement Program - Agricultural Land Easement on behalf of Grant and Betsy Harris. The application

was for the preservation of nearly 375 acres that surround Cowtown Rodeo, a business run by the Harris family on their Salem County property. The easement purchase, finalized in 2018, protects the environmental value of grassland of special significance, and also protects a viable and profitable agricultural operation.

Large blocks of well-managed grasslands like the two parcels included in this easement purchase support groundwater recharge and bird habitat. Among the several species that may benefit from this preservation is the Upland Sandpiper, a State Endangered species that relies on grassland bird habitat for nesting.

NRCS funded a major portion of the purchase with other funding provided by the Open Space Institute and the William Penn Foundation, and with assistance from Natural Lands Trust and Pilesgrove Township.

The NJTV News report from the April 2018 public event celebrating the preservation is online: <https://tinyurl.com/y4lkdyd9>.

NRCS partnered with these dedicated organizations to protect New Jersey's agricultural working lands in FY2018.

NJ State Agricultural Development Committee (SADC)
New Jersey Conservation Foundation
Hunterdon Land Trust

Somerset County
Hunterdon County
Salem County
Warren County

ACEP-ALE Funds obligated in FY2018

ACEP-ALE Easements obligated in FY2018 are protecting nearly 850 acres of working agricultural land!

- \$3.3 Million for 9 easements
- \$732,000 additional for 2 easements through Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) agreements

Easements obligated in prior years for agricultural easements that closed in FY2018

Agricultural Land Easements:
Grasslands of Special Significance
2 easements, 373.63 Acres

General Agricultural Land Easements
5 easements, 324.75 Acres

Farm and Ranchland Protection Program
4 easements, 163.15 Acres

Preserving New Jersey's Wetlands

\$637,671 in FY2018

The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program, Wetlands Reserve Easement (ACEP-WRE) component is a voluntary program that provides an opportunity for landowners to receive financial assistance to enhance wetlands in exchange for retiring marginal land from agricultural production.

ACEP-WRE provides technical and financial assistance to eligible landowners to address wetland, wildlife habitat, soil, water, and related natural resource concerns on private lands in an environmentally beneficial and cost-effective manner.

Family Enjoys Benefits of Wetlands Restored

William and Ann Fox enrolled nearly 30 acres of their retired cranberry operation in NRCS's Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)* in 2012. A permanent easement was placed on the enrolled acres, and they received technical and financial assistance from NRCS to restore their land to an Atlantic white cedar wetland forest. The restoration involved breaching of dikes, restoration of the native streambed, and the development of microtopography features. With more efficient wetland functions, the land is better able to provide surface and subsurface water storage, nutrient cycling, particulate removal, maintenance of plant and animal communities, water filtration or purification, and groundwater recharge. The restored wetlands are also providing many additional benefits to wildlife, such as beavers, ducks, eagles, and the endangered Pine Barren Tree Frog.

*Note: The Wetlands Reserve Program has been discontinued; NRCS now offers opportunity for wetland restoration through the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) – Wetland Reserve Easement (WRE).



Every day we see Great Blue Heron and the White Egret out in the bog, and we want to expand that natural habitat.

The beavers work to flood certain areas which creates more habitat. It's funny actually; we used to be fighting with Mr. Beaver, constantly having to pull out his dams to make sure our farm didn't suffer. It was a lot of work, and we always felt like we were fighting with him. Now instead, we get to work with him – to work with nature. We actually love the dams he puts up now.

--Ann Fox

Easements acquired through FY2018 ACEP-WRE

\$637,671

3 easements and restoration, protecting about 95 acres

Easements obligated in prior years that closed in FY2018

3 easements, over 240 Acres



See ***From Cranberries to Critters*** for more on this project. Link to <https://go.usa.gov/xEVGG>

for the interactive story about William and Ann Fox and the restoration work on their property.



Working to Improve Soil Health in New Jersey

Keeping our soil healthy and productive is of paramount importance. Farmers who utilize soil health principles and systems like no-till, cover cropping and diverse rotations are actually increasing their soil’s organic matter and improving microbial activity. By implementing practices like these, they are sequestering more carbon, increasing water infiltration, improving wildlife and pollinator habitat—all while harvesting better profits and often better yields.

Soil Health Initiative in New Jersey

The Natural Resources Conservation Service has been working with agricultural producers to enhance soil health since the agency was established as the Soil Conservation Service in 1935. In recent years, the agency has stepped up the focus on soil health, and in 2014 NJ-NRCS added the Soil Health Initiative to the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. Through the Initiative, technical and financial assistance was provided to farmers who agreed to add multi-species cover crop and other conservation activities that promote soil health to their management plans for a three-year period on the same field(s).

Fields enrolled in the Initiative were periodically tested by NRCS soil scientists over the 3-year period. Data collected was used to determine if any reduction of erosion, improvement of physical, chemical, and biological properties, weed suppression, increased water-holding capacity, reduction of nutrient losses, and remediation of soil compaction resulted.

An ESRI story map entitled *Soil Benefits from Multi-Species Cover Crop in New Jersey*, provides data collected during the first three years of the Initiative and trends observed. (Online at <https://arcg.is/0v4Hin>)



Soil Health Initiative Contracts



Year	Number of contracts	Dollars	Acres Impacted
FY18	6	\$295K	1,248.1
FY17	7	\$261K	1,221.6
FY16	1	\$45K	10.0
FY15	4	\$45K	151.2
FY14	16	\$325K	1,524.7

More on the Soil Health Initiative online
<https://go.usa.gov/xEfjw>

New Jersey Farmers Championing Soil Health

Jeremy Sahl, Atlantic County, New Jersey

Jeremy Sahl participated in the Soil Health Initiative from 2014 through 2018. He operates a family farm in Port Republic, NJ. Because sandy soils are typically found on his farm, improving soil organic matter was important to him. When Jeremy enrolled his farm in the Initiative, he was focused on planting cover crops that would provide plenty of biomass to increase soil organic matter content.

I originally came into NRCS because I was concerned about the organic matter in my soil. Before I started the Soil Health Initiative, my organic matter was at 0.1%, and I had a sandy knoll where I couldn't get a bushel of corn to grow. After the program, my organic matter is now up a whole percent to 1%, and I am getting 40 bushels to the acre on that sandy knoll now. Maybe by the time Nathan is ready to take over, he'll get 100 bushels per acre.



Jeremy Sahl and son Nathan check out NRCS publication, *Mighty Mini Microbe's Tale*.

Larry Roohr, Burlington County, New Jersey



In 2017, Burlington Soil Conservation District (BSCD) offered funding to support the seeding of cover crop. The District acquired an Agricultural Soil Health Initiative grant funded by The William Penn Foundation and administered by National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Larry Roohr took the District up on that offer. He was so pleased with results on the forty-eight acres of his operation that were seeded with a mix of rye, cereal rye, crimson clover, red clover and radish into a standing soybean crop that he contacted *The New Jersey Farmer* and invited them to send a reporter to his farm. (See page 13 for more on our partner's program.) He also enrolled an additional 86 acres of Windrush Farm in Southampton, NJ, in the EQIP Soil Health Initiative.

In August 2017, Larry Roohr told *The New Jersey Farmer*:

The multi-species is what I liked. That worked out really well. I've been farming long enough to see it's working.

Mike Gross, Hunterdon County, New Jersey



Mike Gross is a third-generation farmer who has been no-tilling his property for ten years. He utilized the North Jersey RC&D aerial cover crop seeding program for the past several years on his Frenchtown operation. The aerial-seeded cover crops have shown great results the past couple of growing seasons. In 2018, Gross planted a seed mixture of Cereal Rye, Crimson Clover, Red Clover and Tillage Radish mixture.

An active part of North Jersey Resource Conservation & Development's Cover Crop Experimentation to Achieve Optimum Soil Health in New Jersey, a project funded through the NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) program, Mike is managing a portion of his cropland with interseeding, drilling, high crop spreading and aerial seeding cover crops. He has also welcomed NRCS and RC&D to hold field days at his farm to showcase the work at the CIG plot. (See page 13 for more on our partner's program.)

Managing Forests and Wildlife

Forest landowners can utilize the Environmental Quality Incentives Program - Working Lands for Wildlife (WLFW) to help manage forest health and improve wildlife habitat. The WLFW initiative focuses on target wildlife species whose decline can be reversed. In partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other agencies and organizations, NRCS has identified target species for WLFW in New Jersey: Golden Winged Warbler, American Black Duck, and Northern Bobwhite (Bobwhite Quail).

Improving Habitat for Golden-winged Warbler

Since 2012, New Jersey landowners have worked with NRCS biologists and conservationists to develop habitat for Golden-winged Warbler (GWWA) and other species. At the end of FY2018, 29 WLFW contracts for 494 privately-held acres have been established. Forest Stand Improvement, Brush Management and other practices that support habitat for Golden-winged Warbler and other imperiled forest bird species are being implemented on these acres.

NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife surveys have shown a sizable increase of young forest-dependent bird species at the improved sites. Golden-winged Warblers have not yet been detected, but this is expected since the forest cuts are still “young.” The response observed from the other bird species indicates the habitat will ultimately be suitable for GWWA. Research has shown that forest cuts that have aged 7 years tend to be suitable as breeding sites for Golden-winged warblers. Some of the earliest WLFW projects will reach the 7-year mark in FY2019.

The interest from forest landowners is growing. Partners like NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife, NJ Audubon, and NJ Forest Service are assisting in all aspects of the program, helping with outreach, conducting on-site monitoring, and even providing additional funding for interested landowners through grants.



The photo at left shows the site after the initial cut; the second photo shows the developing habitat after 2 years.



The photo at left shows conditions after the initial cut; the second shows developing habitat after 3 years.

FY2018

Working Lands for Wildlife

Golden-winged Warbler
\$181,417; 7 contracts
157.8 Acres

American Black Duck
No contracts

Northern Bobwhite
(Bobwhite Quail)
\$7,268; 1 contract
12 Acres

Forestry Conservation Activity Plans (CAPS)

99 contracts
5,491.3 acres

North Jersey
85 contracts on
4,305.8 acres

Central Jersey
12 contracts on
689.6 acres

South Jersey
10 contracts on
495.9 acres

Aquaculture

EQIP Aquaculture Initiative

Following Hurricane Sandy, NRCS initiated a focused effort toward New Jersey's aquaculture producers. The EQIP Aquaculture Initiative supports Gear Cycling, Rack Replacement, Oyster Bed Restoration or Enhancement/ Replenishment, Shoreline Protection.

Oysters are great filterers of nutrient in water. Practices like Oyster Bed Restoration help attract natural spat allowing farmers to not only increase productivity but also improve water quality. Oyster farmers often struggle with biofouling on their gear. Gear cycling helps alleviate this problem while improving water quality by cleaning gear on shore rather than in the water. Rack Replacement to increase the height of oyster racks helps reduce Horseshoe crab mortality rates and subsequently ensure adequate food supplies for the endangered Red Knot bird.

Assistance has been provided to nine Aquaculture producers since the Initiative has been offered. (\$262,000).



Complying with the new rack height requirements on our own would have been a major financial burden that would have likely put a lot of oyster farmers out of business. Having that safety net from NRCS helped ensure that we could continue to remain productive, produce quality oysters and comply with regulations regarding the endangered Red Knot.

– Brian Harman of Elder Point Oysters LLC



Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP)

EWP Flood Plain Restoration in Cumberland County

Emergency Watershed Protection Program Floodplain Easements (EWP-FPE) compensate landowners for allowing vulnerable properties to flood in lieu of making costly structural repairs. The restored floodplains again serve as natural buffers, helping to lessen impacts to adjacent properties. Following Hurricane Sandy, NRCS purchased easements on two properties with \$456,000 of EWP-FPE funds.

One of the easements purchased was a 435 acre salt hay farm located near the Delaware Bay in Cumberland County. The easement was finalized with the landowner in July 2018. Since then, title has been transferred to the Natural Lands Trust, an organization that will steward the easement during restoration and into perpetuity.

Hurricane Sandy had caused extensive damage to dikes, tidegates, and other farm infrastructure. To repair the damages would have been costly and eventually futile against continuing sea level rise. Instead, the easement opportunity offered a more economical alternative with long term environmental benefits.

Restoration will focus on the removal of farm infrastructure.



A 12” metal pipe with a tidegate and support pilings is located in the perimeter dike of the former salt hay operation. During high tide, the flap of the tidegate closes to exclude elevated water levels from hindering salt hay farming operations. At low tide, the flap opened to permit internal drainage of the diked area. This structure and a portion of the dike will be removed to restore stream connectivity and natural tidal exchange.



This picture shows a breach in the dike at a former tidegate structure location. This view is looking into the former salt hay operation and flow is exiting the area as the tide goes down. The breach lies just outside of the easement area so further removal of the dike or widening of the breach cannot be performed. The dike will diminish over time as it is exposed to heavy storms, eventually allowing the farmed area to evolve into conditions resembling its adjacent landscape.



Remains of previous barn structures and debris will be removed off site. In addition, a well (not shown) is planned to be decommissioned, or sealed.

Other Technical Support from NRCS

Soils

The NRCS-NJ Soils Staff provide technical support, including testing for changes in soil properties for the EQIP Soil Health Initiative and other Farm Bill conservation programs. As part of their support to field office staff, New Jersey soil scientists are use Electromagnetic induction (EMI) to assess for compaction. They also utilize a portable X-ray Fluorescence (pXRF) to screen soil for lead and other trace metals, and have screened sites for underserved urban customers at 20 community and school garden sites. FY 2018 technical soils assistance also included onsite investigations for our partners at the N.J. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Geological Survey, and the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, as well as workshops/training sessions/lectures to Rutgers University, the County College of Morris, Duke Farms, the Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA), and Brooklyn College.



3 HAM MLRA Soil Survey Office in Hammonton, NJ

The Coastal Zone Soil Survey (CZSS) is a major focus of the MLRA Soil Survey office. High population density in coastal areas brings commerce, pollution, and development that stresses coastal and near-shore ecosystems. The CZSS provides scientific baseline data useful to help manage, conserve, and sustain near shore areas and shallow-sub tidal ecosystems, vitally important for restoration efforts as well as aquaculture. A few CZSS projects completed by the soil survey office include: the development of a new soil series for barrier island landscapes within the Northern Tidewater Area, which includes New Jersey, Maryland, and Delaware, aimed at enhancing the understanding of the soil geomorphology within these areas for aiding in storm protection; two county wide CZSS projects, Cumberland County NJ and Sussex County DE, which updated both the spatial delineation and the linked soils information for survey map units along the Delaware Bay. Tidal marsh areas were found to be severely eroded, including hundreds of thousands of acres along the coast; this newly enhanced data can target and protect these fragile areas. The Hammonton Soil Survey office, in partnership with University of Maryland, also published the first Subaqueous Soil Survey in a portion of the Chesapeake Bay in Maryland, which includes 6 new subaqueous soil series, which will be used for shellfish and subaquatic vegetation restoration efforts in subaqueous landscapes throughout the Northern Coastal Plain Area in all three states.



Cape May Plant Materials Center in Cape May Court House, NJ

The Cape May Plant Materials Center (NJPMC) serves the northeast region, covering nine states. Cape May PMC staff provide plant solutions for natural resource conservation concerns pertaining to coastal shorelines, sand dunes, mined lands/critical areas, and coastal grassland habitat. The Center's technical products in FY2018 include:

Plant Guides - Virginia saltmarsh mallow (*Kosteletzkya virginica*) Plant Guide and Beach plum (*Prunus maritima*) Plant Guide;

Posters - *Developing Coastal Grassland Technologies for Ecosystem Restoration in a Changing Climate* and *Landscape and Revegetation Success of Native Species Following Chemical and Mechanical Treatment of Phragmites australis*;

Final Study Report - Monarch Germplasm seaside goldenrod (*Solidago sempervirens*) direct seeding trials.



The Cape May PMC 2018 Annual Report is online: <https://go.usa.gov/xmw6W>.

Partnership Highlights

REGIONAL CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM (RCPP)

FY2018 RCPP Awards

- **Columbia Dam Removal and Restoration, \$567,500** agreement managed by Nature Conservancy to support restoration practices in selected areas after the removal of the Columbia Dam (Warren County) has been completed.
- **Black River Greenway-Soil and Water Protection, \$922,000** agreement managed by New Jersey Conservation Foundation to support forestry and water quality conservation projects and agricultural conservation easements in the Black River area of Hunterdon and Somerset counties.



Regional Conservation Partnership Program

Since being introduced in the 2014 Farm Bill, the Regional Conservation Partnership Program has proven to be a great benefit for the Garden State.

New Jersey's conservation partners with similar missions are working with NRCS to protect New Jersey's natural resources.

RCPP Projects in Progress

FY2015 RCPP Awards

Delaware River Watershed Working Lands Conservation Protection, a 5-year national/multi-state award of \$13 million managed by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) with \$6.4 million directly benefitting New Jersey. Funds provided were used to implement cover crop and irrigation by New Jersey growers and three easements were purchased in Salem County.

Delaware Bay Soil and Water Quality Protection Initiative, \$700,000 agreement managed by New Jersey Conservation Foundation treated resource concerns on 6,797 acres and 4 easements in Salem County.

FY2016 RCPP Award

Raritan Basin Partners for Source Water Protection, a \$700,000 agreement managed by New Jersey Water Supply Authority toward conservation projects in the South Branch Raritan River and Lockatong and Wickecheoke Creek Watersheds and one easement in Hunterdon County.

FY2017 RCPP Award

Whole Farm Systems Conservation Trial, \$644,000 agreement managed by NJ State Agriculture Development Committee to enhance natural resource protection on farms already enrolled in farmland preservation and to restore and preserve wetlands in Salem County.

Partnership Highlights

Together we can do more!

New Jersey Partners Promote On-farm Soil Health Practices

NRCS enjoys strong partnerships with other agencies and organizations with similar missions. We especially appreciate these partners that highlight the benefits of cover crop and offer programs that help producers defray cost for aerial seeding, acquisition of specialized equipment, and other soil health activities. Through their efforts and promotion, many New Jersey farmers are becoming familiar with and utilizing opportunities offered through NRCS conservation programs.

North Jersey Resource Conservation & Development Council

- Offers Cover Crop Consulting
- Held the New Jersey No-Till & Cover Crop Conference, December 2018
- Promotes NRCS Soil Health Initiative
- Created signage to promote public awareness



Burlington Soil Conservation District



From right, Burlington County farmer Larry Roehr; Robert Reitmeyer, Burlington County Soil Conservation District manager; and Nicole Cicciaglione, NRCS district conservationist, talk about the benefits of using cover crops in one of Roehr's soybean fields. Roehr planted a cover crop mix last year, participating in a program within the Kirkwood-Cohansey aquifer.

Photo by Sean Clougherty

Burlington District was able to offer a “free sample” of cover crop seeding to growers in the Kirkwood-Cohansey Aquifer in Burlington and Camden counties as described on page 7 of this report. The program attracted farmers who had not participated in soil health programs, and was a great boost to expanding the NRCS Soil Health Initiative in that watershed.

Grant allows BCSCD to make pitch for cover crops, by S. Clougherty, The New Jersey Farmer, August 2017.

<https://americanfarmpublications.com/3744-grant-allows-bcscd-to-make-pitch-for-cover-crops/>

NRCS values our conservation partnerships!

Traditional agency partnerships

- USDA, Farm Service Agency (FSA)
- Rutgers University
- NJDA – State Agricultural Development Committee
- State FAC
- NJ Association of Conservation Districts (NJACD);
- 15 NJ Soil Conservation District

Local Work Groups

NJ State Technical Committee

Conference Exhibits and Presentations:

- NJ Agricultural Convention and Vegetable Growers
- NOFA-NJ
- NJCF Conservation Land Rally
- Central Jersey Vegetable Growers
- FFA Career Development Events

Civil Rights and Outreach

NRCS employees receive training to help them develop and implement outreach plans and strategies to ensure that NRCS is serving all parts of our communities.



In August, NRCS employees had the honor of hearing a presentation from Mr. Bobby Battle, a pioneer in civil rights who grew up in the segregated South.

Mr. Battle told the NRCS assembly about his life experiences and what led him to work for racial equality in the U.S. armed forces and our justice system.

Mr. Battle retired from his post as director of equal employment opportunity and affirmative action for the New Jersey state courts in 2014.



NRCS and partner employees attended a 2 ½ day training to learn more about Working Effectively with Asian Americans and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Producers. The course covered the historical and recent developments in Asia and the Pacific Islands, farming trends in these communities, cultural values and norms. The 28 participants toured two farms and spent time with the Asian producers, learning about their farm operation and their experience working with NRCS.



Nearly sixty people from four states were at the Cape May Plant Materials Center (PMC) in September for the Cape May PCM Field Day. The day-long training prepared by NRCS staff with support from the Cape Atlantic Soil Conservation District and conservation partners included presentations about pollinators and cover crops, and demonstrations of seeding and tillage equipment, and the seed cleaning process.

Seventeen staff and partner employees took part in a Soils Field Day in September. The group had the opportunity to observe the physical properties of soil – texture, structure, and color. They discussed the diverse geographic regions of New Jersey, why soils can be different colors, what environmental changes can impact a soil’s physical properties, how texture can impact the functionality of the soil, what structure can indicate about the health of the soil, and how the structure can impact the functionality of the soil.



Outreach

NRCS employees routinely share the conservation message, information about NRCS conservation programs, and their technical expertise in the communities they serve.



NRCS offers exhibit that demonstrates the impact of various cropping methods

NRCS New Jersey conservationists are using the Rainfall Simulator to demonstrate the impact various cropping methods have on run off and infiltration. Both a table top simulator and a full-size exhibit are available for meetings and events. These exhibits are a great tool for communicating the benefits of no-till and cover crop. Contact the NRCS office that serves your county to learn more.



USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service

www.nj.nrcs.usda.gov

New Jersey NRCS Office Locations

State Office

220 Davidson Avenue, 4th Floor
Somerset, NJ 08873
Phone: 732-537-6040

Service Center Locations

*Serving Bergen, Hudson, Essex, Passaic, Morris, Sussex
and Warren Counties*

Hackettstown Commerce Park
Building #1, 101 Bilby Rd.
Hackettstown, NJ 07840
PHONE: (908) 852-2576 ext. 3
FAX: (855) 305-7207

*Serving Hunterdon, Somerset,
and Union Counties*

687 Pittstown Road, Suite 2
Frenchtown, NJ 08825
PHONE: (908) 782-4614 ext. 3
FAX: (855) 305-7436

*Serving Mercer, Middlesex
and Monmouth Counties*

4000 Kozloski Road, Suite D
PO Box 5033
Freehold, NJ 07728
PHONE: (732) 462-0075 ext. 3
FAX: (855) 305-7205

Serving Burlington, Camden, and Ocean Counties

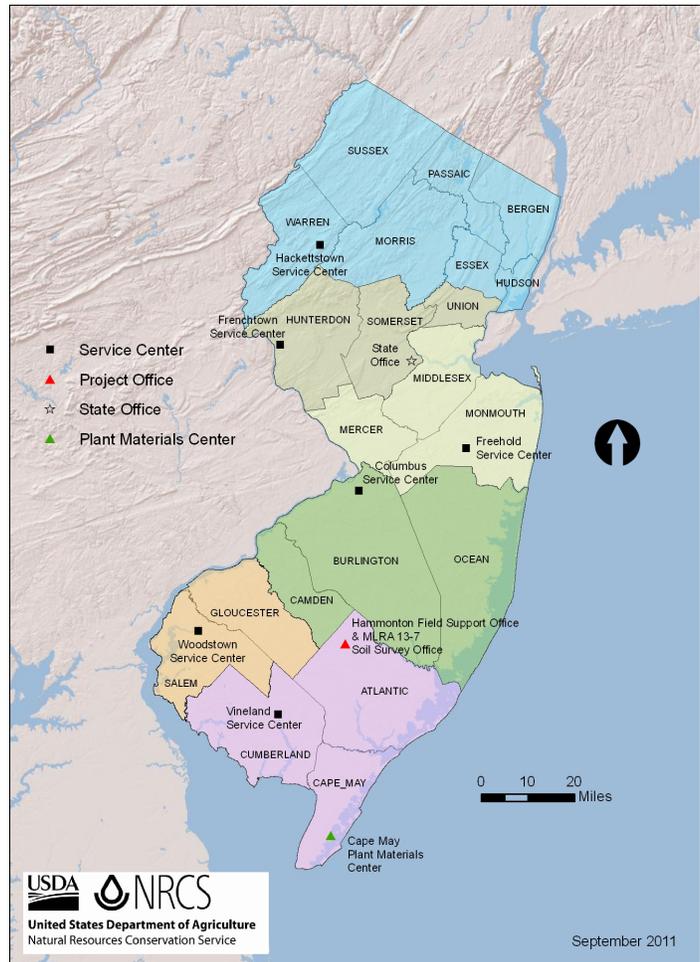
1971 Jacksonville-Jobstown Road
Columbus, NJ 08022
PHONE: (609) 267-1639 ext. 3
FAX: (855) 305-7200

Serving Gloucester and Salem Counties

51 Cheney Road, Suite 2
Woodstown, NJ 08098
PHONE: (856) 769-1126 ext. 3
FAX: (855) 305-7335

*Serving Atlantic, Cape May, and
Cumberland Counties*

Building 5, Suite A
1318 S. Main Rd.
Vineland, NJ 08360
PHONE: (856) 205-1225 ext. 3
FAX: (855) 305-7259



NRCS Conservation Professionals appreciate
the opportunity to serve New Jersey,
helping people help the land!

