NRCS Conservation Programs in Nebraska

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2018 FARM BILL
“Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018”
Farm Bill Implementation

- **FY 2019**
  - Existing Rules and Mandates

- **FY 2020**
  - Phase-1 – Interim Rules

- **FY 2021**
  - Phase-2 – Final Rules
2018 Farm Bill Process

• Incorporate decisions into draft interim regulations
  – Obtain approval from Department and OMB
  – Publish in Federal Register for 60 day comment period

• Review comments received on interim regulation

• Prepare final regulation and publish in the Federal Register
Agricultural Conservation Easement Program
Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

Funding: $450 million each year ($2.25 billion); increase of $225 million
FY19 ACEP-ALE - Implementation

• ALE (General)
  – Application on 2 parcel
    • 4039 acres
  – Entity holding easement
    • NE Land Trust
  – Final Estimated Federal Cost = $675,010.00

RCPP – ALE
  – 3 Applications
    • 348 acres
  – Entities holding easements
    • Little Blue NRD, Tri-Basin NRD and the Upper Big Blue NRD
  – Final Estimated Federal Cost = $472,420.00
FY19 ACEP-WRE Implementation

• Nine offers to purchase – Accepted
  – WRE
    • 7 approved
    • 439.3 acres
    • $2,072,534.00
  – WREP
    • 1 approved
    • 15.6 acres
    • $62,478.00
  – RCPP-WRE
    • 1 approved
    • 42.0 acres
    • $366,105.00

  – We had 4 applications cancel late in the process which did not allow us to move down our list of applications. These totaled 308 acres for an estimated $975,434.00.
FY2020 ACEP-WRE Compensation

• For FY2020 we are going to request an extension of the FY2019 Area Wide Market Analysis (AWMA).
• Land values are within +/- 10% since the 2019 AWMA was completed.
• In FY2021, we will be required to obtain a new AWMA.
Nebraska Agricultural Conservation Easement Program - Wetland Reserve Easements (ACEP-WRE) Geographic Area Rate Caps (GARC's) for FY 2020 NOT to EXCEED RATE = $4,488.00 for all land uses

- Irrigated Cropland
- Dryland Cropland
- Grass/Hay/Other
- Riparian Forestland
- Cropland
- Other

- North: $4,488
- Northeast: $3,836
- Central: $4,340
- Central High: $2,716
- $1,509
- Southwest: $4,340
- Central: $1,629
- $783
- $540
- North: $4,488
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- Central: $4,340
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- $1,509
- Southwest: $4,340
- Central: $1,629
- $783
- $540
- Northeast: $4,340
- Central: $2,716
- $1,509
- Southwest: $4,340
- Central: $2,716
- $1,509
- Southwest: $2,748
- $2,060

NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service

08/27/2019
2019 Spring Flood
EWP – Floodplain Easement Program

• Having a sign-up starting Oct. 1, 2019 with a cut-off date of October 31, 2019.

• Nebraska received an initial allocation of $5,116,134.00 with a Reserve of $4,348,714.00.

• We have interest of an estimated amount over $20,000,000.00.

• Look for interest to increase once we announce official sign-up.

• Need comments on the ranking program sent to bryan.euse@usda.gov or thomas.schleif@usda.gov by Friday, September 27, 2019.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Nebraska Emergency Watershed Protection Program Floodplain Easements (EWPP-FPE)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>County:</strong> &lt;br&gt; <strong>Landowner(s):</strong> &lt;br&gt; <strong>Address:</strong> &lt;br&gt; <strong>Telephone:</strong> &lt;br&gt; <strong>Cell Phone:</strong> &lt;br&gt; <strong>Date:</strong> &lt;br&gt; <strong>Section:</strong> &lt;br&gt; <strong>Township:</strong> &lt;br&gt; <strong>Range:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Flood-Damaged Acres</strong>&lt;br&gt; <strong>Adjacent Floodplain Acres</strong>&lt;br&gt; <strong>Total Acres in Application</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **Application location in the landscape**
   - A. Riverward side of an existing levee or dike structure: 10 Points
   - B. Structures on application area to be removed: 5 Points
   - C. Landward side of an existing levee or dike structure: 0 Points
   - 1) Total: 0

2. **Proximity to Other Protected Lands (within the same watershed)**
   - A. Adjacent to permanently protected property or part of a group EWPP project: 20 Points
   - B. Within one mile of another permanently protected property: 10 Points
   - 2) Total: 0

3. **Benefits to Federally listed T&E Species. (Verified with a biologist statement)**
   - A. Offered area within critical habitat for T&E species or currently using site: 10 Points
   - B. Offered area not within critical habitat for T&E species or currently not using site: 0 Points
   - 3) Total: 0

4. **Easement acres offered:**
   - A. >160 acres: 20 Points
   - B. 100-159 acres: 10 Points
   - C. 50-99 acres: 5 Points
   - D. <30 acres: 0 Points
   - 4) Total: 0

5. **Water Quality:**
5. Water Quality
A. Offered acreage is greater than or equal to 75% Row Crops 20 Points
B. Offered acreage contains cropland, but is less than 75% Row Crops 10 Points
C. Offered acreage is pasture 5 Points
D. Offered acreage is timber or uncropped (reed canary grass/CRP) 1 Point
5) Total 0 Points

6. Landowner Willing to Accept Less for the Easement - submit a signed written statement from the landowner(s).
A. 60% of determined offer value 20 Points
B. 70% of determined offer value 10 Points
C. 80% of determined offer value 5 Points
D. 90% of determined offer value 1 Point
6) Total 0 Points

7. Restoration Cost
A. $0 10 Points
B. $200/Acre or Less 7 Points
C. $201-$400/Acre 4 Points
D. Greater than $400/Acre 0 Points
7) Total 0 Points

8. Offer area will restore landowners entire contiguous floodplain. 10 Points
8) Total 0 Points

TOTAL 0 Points

Signature

NRCS FPE-WRE Team Leader

Date
Conservation Stewardship Program
Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

• Funding:
  • $700 million in FY19
  • $723 million in FY20
  • $750 million in FY21
  • $800 million in FY22
  • $1 billion in FY23
Conservation Stewardship Program - Nebraska

- Results of 2019 General Signup
  - Applications = 614
  - New contracts = 225
  - Approx. acres in contracts = 516,000
  - Contract obligations = $22.9M
Conservation Stewardship Program - Nebraska

• Results of 2019 General Signup
  – New contracts in 59 counties
  – Counties with highest number of new contracts:
    • Harlan, Lincoln, Nemaha
Popular CSP Activities in 2019

• Prescribed Grazing
• Pest Management
• Cover Crops
• Tree/Shrub Establishment
• Nutrient Management
Conservation Stewardship Program

• Enhancements
  – 225 enhancements – 9 new in 2019
  – Requests for new enhancements must be made prior to the end of December each year.
2019 Payment Rates (unchanged from 2018)

- Existing Activity Payment
  *Number of resource concerns met at the time of application x $350 (land use neutral)

Land use rate x acres

- Crop and Pastured Cropland = $7.50 per acre
- Pasture = $3.00 per acre
- Range = $1.00 per acre
- Forest = $0.50 per acre
- Farmstead = $7.50 per acre
- Associated Agriculture Land = $0.50 per acre
CSP – Grassland Conservation Initiative

• The Agricultural Improvement Act (2018 Farm Bill) authorized NRCS to enroll producers with eligible base acres in GCI contracts from FY2019 – 2023. The GCI assists producers in protecting grazing uses; conserve and improve soil, water and wildlife resources; and achieving related conservation values.
CSP – Grassland Conservation Initiative

• Eligible Land
  – Base acres documented as grass, idle, or fallow through the years 2009 – 2017.
  – Must address a resource concern associated with grassland.
CSP – Grassland Conservation Initiative

• Applicant Eligibility
  – Must be the operator, owner or other tenant, and must have control of the land and have an interest in the operation where the base acres are located.
CSP – Grassland Conservation Initiative

• Payment = $18 /acre/year
• Contract term = 5 years
• Applicants can only enroll once during the 5-year farm bill
CSP – Grassland Conservation Initiative

• Nebraska 2019 GCI signup
  – 246 contracts
  – 73 different counties
  – $1.5M in obligations
  – Brown, Holt, Lancaster, Lincoln and Thurston have most contracts (>10).
Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

- Provides mandatory funding at $300 million (from $100 million)
  - 50% of available funds for state or multi-state projects
  - 50% of available funds for projects within critical conservation areas
  - **Removed National funding pool**
- Removes 7% funding contributions from covered programs
Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

- Adds CRP and Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act as covered programs
  - Land enrolled into the new CSP-Grassland Conservation Initiative is not eligible
- Agreements can be for longer than 5 years if longer period is necessary to meet the objectives of the program
- A partnership agreement may be renewed for a period not to exceed 5 years.
- Provides ability to renew partnership agreements through an expedited non-competitive process if Secretary determines that a project has met or exceeded the objectives of the project and extension is requested by the partner.
• **Existing Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) projects in Nebraska**
  
  – Ogallala Aquifer & Platte River Recovery – CPNRD & TPNRD
  
  – Regional Grassland Bird & Grazing Enhancement Initiative - NGPC
  
  – Cropland Cover for Soil Health and Wildlife – NGPC
  
  – Lower Elkhorn Water and Soil Conservation Project
  
  – Republican Basin Conservation Partnership – LRNRD
  
  – Divots in the Pivots – UBBNRD/RWBJV
  
  – Wahoo Creek Water Quality Sites 26 & 27 – LPNNRD
  
  – Papillion Creek Site WP-1 Dam - PMRNRD
RCPAP APF Timeline – FY2019

• **September 3, 2019**: Announcement of Program Funding (APF) through grants.gov:
  - Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-NRCS-NHQ-RCPP-19-01
  - CFDA #: 10.932, Regional Conservation Partnership Program

• **December 3, 2019**: Applications due by 5:00 p.m. EST

• **September 26, 2019**: Informational webinar, 3:00 p.m. EST

• Once agreements are signed, partnership activities and obligations may begin.
• Vision and Goals of the Program
  – Impact—RCPP applications must propose effective and compelling solutions that address one or more natural resource priorities to help solve natural resource challenges. Partners are responsible for evaluating a project’s impact and results.
• Vision and Goals of the Program
  – *Partner Contributions*—Partners are responsible for identifying any combination of cash and in-kind value-added contributions to leverage NRCS’s RCPP investments. It is NRCS’s goal that partner contributions at least equal the NRCS investment in an RCPP project. Substantive and sizable partner contributions are given priority consideration as part of the RCPP application evaluation criteria.
Vision and Goals of the Program

- Innovation—NRCS seeks projects that integrate multiple conservation approaches, implement innovative conservation approaches or technologies, build new partnerships, or effectively take advantage of program flexibilities to deliver conservation solutions.
Vision and Goals of the Program

- **Partnerships and Management**—Partners must have experience, expertise, and capacity to manage the partnership and project, provide outreach to producers, and quantify the environmental (and when possible, economic and social) outcomes of an RCPP project. RCPP ranking criteria give priority consideration to applicants that meaningfully engage historically underserved farmers and ranchers.
## RCPP FY 19/20 Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RCPP Action</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RCPP FY 2019 funding announcement released</td>
<td>September 3, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCPP renewals awards announced</td>
<td>By November 15, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application period closes</td>
<td>December 3, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCPP review process initiated</td>
<td>December 4, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCPP Interim Final Rule released</td>
<td>Late 2019/Early 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFA funding announcement released</td>
<td>Soon after IFR release</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCPP review process complete</td>
<td>January 15, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCPP award announcement</td>
<td>Week of March 9, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2019 RCPP partnership agreements (including renewals) executed</td>
<td>By mid-June 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Next funding announcement released</td>
<td>July 1, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFA awards announced</td>
<td>Summer 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Environmental Quality Incentive Program
EQIP Fund Allocations in 2019

- **EQIP – National Initiatives** $4.3 million
  - NWQI $1.5 million
    - 3 watersheds: Bazile, Wahoo Creek, Big Sandy
  - Forestry Service Partnership $328,000
    - 3 NRD’s: UNWNRD, MNNRD, ULNRD
  - Disaster Relief $2.5 million

- **EQIP General** $24.8 million
  - EQIP General Distribution
    - State Initiatives $11.5 million
      - Includes Wildlife 10% & HU 10%
    - Balance to LWG Fund Pools $13.3 million
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

- Funding: $9.1 Billion (increase of $1.17 billion)
  
  $1.75 Billion for FY19
  $1.75 Billion for FY20
  $1.8 Billion for FY21
  $1.85 Billion for FY22
  $2.025 Billion for FY23
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

- Proportion of EQIP funding:
  - Livestock: 50% (reduced from 60%) of the funds under the program shall be targeted at practices relating to livestock production and grazing management practices.
  - Wildlife Habitat: At least 10% (increased from 5%) of the funds under the program shall be targeted at practices benefitting wildlife habitat.
    - Clarifies that contracts entered into solely for wildlife practices can be up to 10 years in length.
Source Water Protection Program

– Dedicate at least 10 percent of the total funds available for conservation programs (with the exception of CRP), each year, to be used for source water protection.

– STCs working with the State Technical Committee, public water utilities and the State drinking water agency must select initial local priority areas where we can anticipate targeting approximately 10 percent of conservation program funding to benefit source water protection.
Source Water Protection Program

- Addresses excessive nutrients, and other impairments of drinking water sources (ground water or surface water).
- Addresses the conservation of water to advance drought mitigation
- Practice incentive payments for this initiative will go to EQIP eligible owners/operators of agricultural land who install conservation practices relating to water quality and quantity.
- States can select up to 10 conservation practices to be eligible for 90% practice payment rate.
Source Water Protection Program

– Is geographically located to address a national resource concern in a specific watershed.
– Focus of initiative is the protection of community water systems that is defined by 25 people or more, 15 or more service connections, year-round.
– In Nebraska, 99% of municipalities use ground water as their source of drinking water.
– Groundwater Management Areas – may be eligible if they encompass several community water systems.
Source Water Protection Initiative

State Technical Committee Meeting
September 12, 2019

Elbert Traylor, NDEE - Sam Radford, NDEE
Objectives of the Source Water Initiative

- Efficient implementation of the initiative
- Maximize impact to achieve measurable results
  - Target funds to the most critical resources
  - Prioritize sufficient area to accommodate available funds
- Coordinate with existing programs
- Achieve multiple agency objectives
- Base criteria on existing defined values (WQ St’d, MCL, Reg. Triggers)
- Prioritize practices with direct impact on resource concern
- Reward proactive Districts
### EQIP Source Water Protection Priorities Areas

*Drafted by Elbert Traylor and Sam Radford (NDEE) from work group input.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA FOR PRIORITY LEVELS</th>
<th>PRIORITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applications located within a Wellhead Protection Area as delineated by NDEE, OR</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applications located within a delineated watershed that directly drains to a surface water intake of a public water system.</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applications located within a Phase 2, 3, or 4 Groundwater Quality Management Area encompassing ≥ 1 Well Head Protection Area, OR</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applications located within a delineated Groundwater Quantity Management Area encompassing ≥ 1 Wellhead Protection Area(^2).</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applications located in a delineated Phase 1 Groundwater Quality Management Area encompassing ≥ 1 Wellhead Protection Area(^3).</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ineligible: Applications located within an area that does not fit the definitions above.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Time of Travel (TOT) lines were created for each municipal well using the three-dimensional numerical groundwater model MODFLOW. This model is based on the best known geologic, water level, and pumping information available. A number of model scenarios were run to examine the various potential capture zones for the wells. A composite capture zone, the area encompassing all modeled scenarios, was used to delineate the City's Wellhead Protection (WHP) Area as it provides an adequate buffer to account for seasonal changes and natural variability in the aquifer. Additionally, property boundaries, reclamation lines, and water bodies were used to draw the WHP boundaries to allow for easier land management and identification.
Potential Priority Practices (TBD)

- Reduced nitrogen application
- Nitrogen scavenging cover crops
- Split nitrogen application
- Delayed nitrogen application
- Nitrification inhibitors
- Change crop rotation (CCB to CB)
- Small grain/forage/grass rotation
- Irrigation management
- Integrated pest management
- Split Atrazine application
- Atrazine applied post planting
- Atrazine rate reduction (≥0.5lbs)
- Alternative herbicide
- Buffer strips
- Change crop rotation (CCB to CB)
- Cover crop/small grain/forage rotation
Source Water Sub-committee Meeting

September 18, 2019
10:00 am – 1:00 pm
Upper Big Blue NRD
The Phase 2-4 and Quantity Management Areas that intersect a Wellhead Protection Area define the medium priority level.

Total Medium & High Priority Areas: 8,006,050 acres
Isolated Phase 2-4 areas and Quantity Management Areas that do not intersect a Wellhead Protection Area have been removed from the Medium Priority level.

- Merged the Upper Republican GMAs identified as > 25% decline
- Removed two isolated Phase 2 GMAs and one Phase 3 GMA from the Upper Republican not connected to any WHPAs
- Upper Elkhorn NRD: Removed two GMAs along the southern border of the NRD.
- Lower Niobrara NRD: Removed 4 isolated GMAs not associated with a WHPA
- Upper Big Blue NRD: Removed two high risk groundwater mgmt. areas not connected to any WHPAs.
National Water Quality Initiative

- Wahoo Creek - Saunders
- Bazile Creek – Antelope, Pierce, Knox
- Big Sandy Creek – Little Blue NRD
- Turkey Creek – Lower Big Blue NRD

Readiness Phase Project
Bazile Creek HUC 12s
Selected for the
2016 National Water Quality Initiative
in Nebraska

Legend
- 2016 NWQI Area
- NRD Boundary
- County Boundary
Environmental Quality Incentives Program

- Local Work Groups
LOCAL WORK GROUP MEETINGS

• Meetings completed in January/February 2019

• LOCAL WORK GROUP AGENDA ITEMS:
  o Priority Resource Concerns
  o Fund Pool - Ranking Tools – Screening Tools
    • Revised ranking process for FY2020 – CART
    • Reduce the number of State initiatives. (Keep National mandated)
  o Practice Payment Schedule
  o Eastern Red Cedar Policy – 5 questions
SUMMARY: Priority Resource Concerns

1) Soil Erosion
2) Water Quality degradation
3) Soil Quality Degradation
4) Insufficient Water
5) Degraded Plants
6) Livestock Production Limitation
7) Fish and Wildlife
8) Excess Water
9) Air Quality
10) Inefficient Energy
FY2020 EQIP State Policy Decisions

- FY2020 LWG/NRCS Recommended and Approved by STC
  - Revised policy on EQIP payments for Eastern Red Cedar
  - End option for irrigated to dry re-enrollment
  - EQIP application cutoff date - TBD
  - Applications ranked/Preapproved - TBD

- Multiple adjustments to practice scenarios and payment rates
  - Integrated Pest Management (595) – Develop new scenario for a non-atrazine alternative for corn to protect surface water quality and assist with managing herbicide resistance
  - Brush Management (314) – Develop “Ultra Low Density” scenario
FY2020 EQIP State Policy Decisions

• FY2020 LWG/NRCS Recommended and approved by STC

• Practice Payment caps
  • Establish $10,000 payment cap for Nutrient Management (590)
  • Establish $80,000 payment cap for Waste Storage Facility (313)
  • Establish $10,000 payment cap for Integrated Pest Mgmt. (595)

• Retain existing payment caps:
  • (340) Cover Crop - $7,500
  • (329) No Till - $5,000
  • (528) Prescribed Grazing, Adaptive Mgmt - $15,000
  • (327) Conservation Cover - $7,500
  • (645) Upland Wildlife Habitat Mgmt. - $7,500
Revised NRCS Policy on Eastern Red Cedar
Effective October 1, 2019

• No changes in the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide that would unilaterally prevent the use of Eastern redcedar in any portion of the state where it is deemed suitable to the site and will accomplish the purpose of the conservation practice standard according to the design parameters outlined in associated technical documents.

• No changes to EQIP policy for cost-share on eastern redcededar in Vegetative Zone I, essentially the Panhandle portion of the state.
Revised NRCS Policy on Eastern Red Cedar

• In Vegetative Zones 2-4 – (the rest of the state) it was decided to continue availability for cost-share under EQIP on eastern redcedar in windbreaks and tree plantings for very specific site conditions and purposes. The specific site conditions and installation purposes approved for eastern redcedar plantings in Zones 2-4 are:
  o To manage snow deposition, reduce energy usage, and provide screening or winter protection for farmsteads.
  o To manage snow deposition to protect public infrastructure (most notably public roadways) in the form of living snow fence in identified problem locations.
Revised NRCS Policy on Eastern Red Cedar

• In Vegetative Zones 2-4 – (continued)
  ○ To provide shelter from winter weather, manage snow deposition and/or address odor control for areas where animals are concentrated including calving areas or in open lots.
  ○ To help control excessive wind erosion and protect sensitive plants from damage where a higher level of windbreak density is deemed necessary to address the resource concern.
Revised NRCS Policy on Eastern Red Cedar

• In Vegetative Zones 2-4, for other windbreak and tree planting purposes that include Eastern redcedar and are not described in the criteria above, EQIP application requests for cost-share under EQIP will be set as a “low priority.”

• Two Nebraska Natural Resources Districts, the Twin Platte NRD and the Upper Loup NRD do not provide cost-share assistance on Eastern redcedar and NRCS intends to honor and support those locally-made decisions. In those NRD’s, EQIP applications that include Eastern redcedar species in the planting will be a low priority in application ranking.
EQIP Allocation Formula
FY 2020
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource Concern</th>
<th>Nebraska Derived Critical Ac based on Statewide Datasets (w/Fert Ac)</th>
<th>% of Nebraska Derived Critical Acres</th>
<th>Manual Adjustments</th>
<th>Ex: $15,967,994 to distribute based on Nebraska Derived Critical Ac %'s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soil Erosion</td>
<td>13,921,289</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td></td>
<td>$ 3,687,204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soil Quality Degradation</td>
<td>1,458,536</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td></td>
<td>$ 386,309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excess Water</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Quality Degradation</td>
<td>15,372,612</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td>$ 4,071,602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degraded Plant Condition</td>
<td>6,879,003</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td></td>
<td>$ 1,821,978</td>
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<tr>
<td>Air Quality</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Livestock Production Limitation</td>
<td>15,000,505</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
<td></td>
<td>$ 3,973,046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate Habitat for Fish and Wildlife</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient Water</td>
<td>7,656,306</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td>$ 2,027,855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals for Local Pools</td>
<td>60,288,250</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$ 15,967,994</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Resource Concern – Soil Erosion on Cropland
Resource Concern – Soil Erosion on Grassland
Resource Concern
Degraded Plant Condition on Grassland/Pasture
Undesirable plant productivity & Excessive Plant Pest Pressure

The map to the left represents all factors listed below by the overall percentage that each NRD has of the individual resource factors. Those factors are: Total number of cattle, Total acres of grassland/pasture, and Total number of instances of unique noxious weed occurrences.
Resource Concern - Livestock Production Limitation On Grassland/Pasture

Inadequate livestock shelter

This map represents all factors listed below by the overall percentage that each NRD has of the individual resource factors. Factors: Total number of cattle, Total acres of grassland/pasture.
Resource Concern – Inefficient Use of Irrigation Water on Cropland

This map represents all factors listed below by the overall percentage that each NRD has of the individual resource factors. Factors: Total Taxed Irrigated Acres, Irrigation Wells, USGS 2005 Acres Surface Irrigated, NASS 2013 Total Cropland Ac.
Resource Concern Water Quality Degradation
Excess nutrients & Pathogens in surface & ground waters
Resource Concern Soil Quality Degradation
Organic matter depletion, Cropland/Grassland/Pasture
<table>
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<td>-</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
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**Balance after above Fund Pools** $15,967,994

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<td><strong>Sub Concerns:</strong> Sheet, rill &amp; wind erosion &amp; Concentrated Flow, Crop, Grassland &amp;</td>
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<tr>
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**Practices**

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<tr>
<td>638</td>
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**SRA Components:** 1% or greater on cropland and concentrated flow of Ks > 30 and slope > 9%  
**SRA Components:** 2% of total Grass/Range Area at erosion risk (550,316 Acre)  
**SRA Components:** on Choppy Sand or Loess Slope with > 20% slope and concentrated flow of Ks > 30 with slope > 6%
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degraded Plant Condition</th>
<th>Livestock Production Limitation</th>
<th>Insufficient Water/Excess Water</th>
<th>Water Quality Degradation</th>
<th>Soil Quality Degradation</th>
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Costs: The total FA allocation for the year is $17,763,929.
CART
Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool
CART Objectives

• Streamlined Efficient Customer Service
• Program Neutral Planning
• Programs Informed by Planning Process
• Adaptive Learning Software
• Full Integration with Planning and Program Policy
Current Program Rankings

- **Written - National Questions, State Questions, & Locally Led Questions**
  - Same questions asked multiple times
  - Non-Applicable questions still had to be answered

- **References: Priority Maps and Priority Practice Matrixes**
  - Binder of ranking reference documents

- **Manually tied resource concerns to ranking and contract**
  - Had to match manually created NRCS-CPA 52

- **No connection between ranking and the host of assessment tools or Toolkit**

- **Result:**
  - Increased potential for errors
  - Cumbersome
  - Time consuming
CART – Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool

- **National Template, State Ranking Pools, & Locally Led Ranking Pools**
  - Duplicative questions eliminated
  - Non-Applicable questions will not appear

- **State and Locally Led Ranking Pools**
  - Geospatial Conditions – integrates priority maps
  - Applicable Practices – integrates practice reference matrices

- **Connection between Ranking and the Conservation Assessment and CD**
  - Working towards auto populated NRCS-CPA52

- **Results:**
  - Decreased potential for errors
  - Ease of use
  - Increased efficiency
  - Increased consistency
AERT Correlation to CART

National Ranking Questions

State Ranking Questions

Locally Led Questions

National Ranking Templates

State Ranking Pools
- Plan Assessment
- Pool Priorities

Locally Led RCs Weighting & Questions

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<td>Planned Practice Effects</td>
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<td>Pool Priorities</td>
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<td>Resource</td>
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<tr>
<td>Application Score</td>
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Preparation

• Utilize the Locally Led Process for Input
• Strategic Ranking Pools
• Review Priorities and Questions
• Determining Geospatial Supporting Layers
CART – Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool

Soils - Geospatial

Special Resource Concerns
- Wildlife – ex. Sage Grouse
- CCBI and SVI applications
- LiDAR

Streamline Planning
- Inventory and Analyze Resources with GIS Layers
- Allows the use of SVI and CCBI tools as planning resources
Understanding Plan Assessment Points

Plan Assessment points by ranking pool:

- Plan Assessment points come from evaluating the Program Neutral Conservation Plan
- Only resource concerns which are identified by the ranking pool will garner plan assessment points
- Only practices on land uses which are identified by the ranking pool will garner plan assessment points

**Threshold** - **Existing Condition & Practices** + **Planned Practice Effects**
CART assists planners to analyze resource data captured in the inventory and compare against the threshold to determine if planning criteria is met. Planner override will be allowed.
CART – Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool

- Soil Erosion – Sheet and Rill Example – Existing Condition

**Predictive:** Geospatially Calculated Existing Condition = 40

<table>
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<th>Erosion - Water</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Modified R Factor Class</td>
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<td>A</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Low</td>
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## CART – Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool

### Soil Erosion – Sheet and Rill Example - Alternatives

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<th>Conservation Management Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contour Buffer Strips (332)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contour Farming (330)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cover Crop (340)</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residue and Tillage Management, No-Till (329)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced Till (345)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stripcropping (585)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrace (600)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Supporting practices may be necessary to support the above practices, and will be identified as necessary supporting practices, but do not add conservation management points to the total.*
CART – Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool

- Soil Erosion – Sheet and Rill Example - Planned

**Predictive**: Geospatially Calculated Planned Strip-cropping Condition = 30

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management System Comparisons</th>
<th>Erosion - Water</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Modified R Factor Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;=50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erodibility Potential - Water</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately High</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CART assists planners illustrate various alternative practices and their effect on the resource concern.

**BONUS:** Ranking taking place in background
Site Vulnerability
Impacts risk level to meet planning criteria

1. Low Risk (15 Points)
   - Ex. Flat

2. Medium Risk (50 Points)
   - Ex. Gently rolling

3. High Risk (80 Points)
   - Ex. Steep Hillside
Existing Condition & Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Condition</th>
<th>Existing Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 points</td>
<td>15 Point Threshold (Flat)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex. Medium Residue Crop</td>
<td>10 points Ex. Filter Strip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 Vulnerability Ranking Points</td>
<td>20 Vulnerability Ranking Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Point Threshold (Gently Rolling)</td>
<td>50 Vulnerability Ranking Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 Point Threshold (Steep Hillside)</td>
<td>80 Vulnerability Ranking Points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. 20 points
2. Ex. Medium Residue Crop
3. 10 points
4. Ex. Filter Strip
5. 20 Vulnerability Ranking Points
6. 50 Vulnerability Ranking Points
7. 80 Point Threshold (Steep Hillside)
Planned Practices

- **Planned Practices**
  - 40 Points
  - Ex. Cover Crop and Conservation Tillage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Condition</th>
<th>Existing Practice</th>
<th>Planned Practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 Vulnerability Ranking Points</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>80 Point Threshold (Steep Hillside)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 Point Threshold</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Planned Practices

Assessment Ranking Pts

Site 1
0 Vulnerability
+40 Planned Practices

Site 2
20 Vulnerability
+40 Planned Practices

Site 3
50 Vulnerability
+40 Planned Practices

Existing Condition

Existing Practice

Planned Practices

CSP

EQIP

Conservation Service

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Multi-Ranking Pool Evaluation

A Plan Assessment is made up of multiple practices which may be eligible under multiple ranking pools.

CART will allow consideration for funding under all applicable ranking pools

- Participants may be considered for funding in as many ranking pools as are applicable
- Plans may receive funding from multiple ranking pools
- CART will assure a practice is not funded twice on the same land unit by separate funding sources
CART Field Office Workflow

Enhanced Field Office Workflow

Planner Pre-Screens as determined by State

Planner Creates Schedule
  • Pick PLUs

Planner Creates Assessment
  • Select RC
  • Assess Existing Condition including Existing Practices
  • Select New Practice
  • Planner Override
  • Collect Special Concerns Info
  • Complete Assessment

Planner Ranks Assessment Practices
  • Identify applicable Ranking Pools
  • Score Priority Questions
  • Finalize Score
  • Estimate Cost by Ranking Pool

Program Manager Selects Assessment and associated Practices by Ranking

Planner Completes Plan
  • Digitizes Practices
  • Contract Wizard

Planner Finalizes Contract

State Office Finalizes Agreement

Client Info and/or Field Visits conducted as appropriate

May Start Application, including eligibility, but must be completed by end of Ranking Process

May Start Application, including eligibility, but must be completed by end of Ranking Process

Workflow Application

Protracts  CD  CART  CPDES  FM  NEST

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Summary

Each Ranking Pool will be customized by the program manager after incorporating locally led input.

Customizable aspects include:

- Geographic Extent of Ranking Pool
- Filtering subdivisions of funding within a Ranking Pool
- Selection of Land Uses
- Selection and Weighting of Resource Concerns
- Selection of Conservation Practices
- Weighting between 5 Ranking Weights
- Applicability Questions or Geometry
- Pool Resource Priority Questions and Geometry
- Pool Programmatic Priority Questions and Geometry
Questions?
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