Glacierland Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council is continuing its effort to implement good conservation in Northeastern Wisconsin through conservation collaboration with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Through a Conservation Collaboration Agreement with NRCS, Glacierland RC&D was able to hire Ryan Jacques and Nick Myers (pictured above) to fill Soil Conservationist positions in both Brown and Manitowoc County USDA Service Centers as of January 2019.

Through the Conservation Collaboration Agreement, Nick and Ryan are able to take on a variety of tasks and responsibilities related to protecting and conserving our natural resources in partnership with NRCS. Their day-to-day work in the USDA Service Centers allow them to assist NRCS staff with implementing the conservation provisions of the 2018 Farm Bill, developing conservation plans that address natural resource concerns and providing technical assistance to agricultural producers in Northeast Wisconsin.

Nick and Ryan have assisted NRCS staff with fiscal year 2019 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) sign ups and with fiscal year 2019 Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) sign ups for Brown and Manitowoc Counties, as well as three counties in the southeast area also. Between the two new employees, they also helped to reduce workload for NRCS staff by conducting nearly 40 highly erodible land and wetland checks spanning over five counties for the 2019 Food Security Act compliance reviews. This was in addition to completing 60 USDA Farm Service Agency Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract status reviews in Manitowoc County alone.

Landowners in the area have been pleased with the additional technical service and support the Glacierland employees offer to the area. “It’s great that there is finally some extra staff in the county to get to smaller priorities like this,” said one landowner as Nick Myers assisted him with plant identification in his new CRP planting. “Usually I just receive a letter or phone call telling me what to do next without really knowing what I’m looking at out
here.” Myers was able to provide one-on-one assistance to the landowner, meeting his needs.

Landowners are not the only ones happy with how the agreement is going. Matt Rataczak, NRCS District Conservationist in Manitowoc County explained, “It has been a good partnership so far with Glacierland RC&D and NRCS. I think both NRCS and Glacierland RC&D are benefiting out of this agreement and we are lucky to have good quality employees like Nick and Ryan gaining valuable experience in the field office, while also implementing good conservation.”

As we move into the fall, Nick and Ryan will continue to offer their assistance by taking part in the fiscal year 2020 EQIP sign up and by contracting the funded fiscal year 2019 EQIP and CSP applications, along with anything else they can do to assist NRCS staff in the Northeast Area.

The current contract between Glacierland and NRCS is a three-year agreement that will continue through September 2021 but has the potential to be renewed after the initial three years. “We’re excited to bring on Nick and Ryan as partnering staff to increase the conservation on the ground in northeast Wisconsin. NRCS enjoys working with partners to extend available resources and further meet our customers needs; the agreement between NRCS and Glacierland RC&D is a perfect example of this,” added Eric Allness, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Partnerships.

Ty Larson, Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations in the Northeast Area, is very pleased with the agreement also. “NRCS is extremely excited to team up with Glacierland RC&D once again to deliver conservation through a Conservation Collaboration Agreement,” said Larson. “This grant will assist NRCS in putting more boots on the ground in Northeast Wisconsin for conservation planning and implementation. Glacierland has been a long-time conservation partner with NRCS Wisconsin and has a great track record of conservation efforts and accomplishments.”

Angela Biggs, State Conservationist, adds, “Nick and Ryan jumped right into their positions and are teaching the importance of soil health out in the field already. They recently demonstrated our NRCS rainfall simulator at a field day, sharing the four principles of soil health.” NRCS is working with producers to ensure the four basic principles of soil health are at the forefront – minimize disturbance, keep soil covered, energize the soil with plant diversity, and maximize living roots. These conservation principles, along with others, are being shared through the collaboration.

Both Glacierland and NRCS have high expectations for the agreement and know these conservation efforts and accomplishments will continue long after the current contract expires.

To learn more about Glacierland RC&D, visit www.glacierlandrcd.org. To learn more about NRCS and the technical and financial assistance they provide farmers and landowners, visit www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov.