

Assisting California Tribal Agriculture



Natural Resources Conservation Service

Concerned with:

Reestablishing or encouraging traditionally used plants?

Too many trees and shrubs causing a wildfire hazard?

Improving irrigation efficiency in tribal community gardens?

Making preparations for cultural burning?

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service can help!

Overview

California is home to 110 federally recognized tribes, many other tribal communities, and to the largest general population of Native Americans in the United States. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) works to ensure that tribal rights and concerns are taken into account, to take appropriate steps to remove impediments to working effectively with tribes, and to assist tribes to achieve self-sufficiency.

Tribal lands across California can vary considerably by size and natural resource concerns. Many are challenged by their remote location, lack of water for irrigation, or soils that are unsuitable for conventional agriculture. Resource concerns may include forest and rangeland health, access to culturally important plants, creating suitable subsistence gardens, and supporting habitat for various animal species, and more. NRCS seeks to partner with tribal communities in California to support their objectives in the state.

Working with NRCS

The first step to find out about NRCS programs and financial assistance is to contact your local field office. NRCS staff will follow a planning process that starts with identifying your objectives and concerns and inventorying resource conditions. They will analyze this information to develop resource management alternatives that fit your farming situation and objectives.

GETTING STARTED...

Go to the Office

We have 54 offices across the state. NRCS will work with you to develop a conservation plan tailored to help you improve conditions on your property. This voluntary plan will be based on your priorities and solid science. The plan may also be the basis to apply for financial assistance.

Financial Assistance

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary program that has been widely used by landowners in California. EQIP shares with landowners the cost of conservation practices (see sidebar on back) to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits, such as improved water and air quality, reduced soil erosion, improved soil quality, or more habitat for pollinators.

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) offers additional opportunities for those already meeting a baseline level of stewardship.

Apply

You may apply any time during the year. Eligible projects will be evaluated, prioritized and selected for funding as budget allocations permit.



USDA is an Equal Opportunity Provider, Employer and Lender.

Technical and Financial Assistance

Through programs such as EQIP, you can apply for financial assistance to cover part of the implementation costs. Local field staff will help determine which funding source is best for you; Tribal Rangeland, Tribal Forestland, Traditional Plants Restoration, Diversified Farms, or regular fund pools.



NRCS staff can help you develop resource management alternatives that fit your situation and objectives.



About NRCS, FSA and RMA

In more than 80 years of assisting farmers, ranchers, and private forestland owners, NRCS has assembled a body of technical standards (such as those in the sidebar at right) to address natural resource concerns. The USDA's Farm Services Agency (FSA) and Risk Management Agency (RMA) provide other critical resources such as farm loans, crop insurance and disaster assistance.

For more information
on NRCS Farm Bill conservation programs visit
www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/ca/programs/

Top Tribal Conservation Practices

NRCS offers technical and financial assistance for dozens of conservation practices. Listed below are a few of those most commonly used by Tribal producers.



TREE/SHRUB ESTABLISHMENT

Establishing woody plants by planting seedlings or cuttings, direct seeding, or natural regeneration. Benefits include wildlife habitat, erosion control and improving natural diversity.



MICROIRRIGATION

Used to make frequent application of small quantities of water on or below the soil surface, as drops, tiny streams or miniature spray through emitters, or applicators placed along a water delivery line.



BRUSH MANAGEMENT

The application of management or a method of treatment to remove, reduce, or control perennial woody (nonherbaceous or succulent) plants that are invasive and noxious.



HERBACEOUS WEED CONTROL

Removal or control of herbaceous weeds including invasive, noxious and prohibited plants to enhance the quality and quantity of forage, prevent wildfire, and create desired plant communities.



FOREST STAND IMPROVEMENT

Treating areas made to improve the composition, structure, condition, health, and growth of even- or uneven-aged stands.



FUEL BREAK

A strip or block of land on which the vegetation, debris and detritus have been reduced and/or modified to control or diminish the risk of the spread of fire crossing the strip or block of land.



ACCESS ROAD

Establishing a road to provide a fixed route for vehicular travel to allow management of timber, livestock, agriculture, wildlife habitat, and other conservation enterprises.