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.
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.

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.

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/