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USDA Invests \$1 Million in Partner-Driven Projects that Protect Natural Resources in Alabama

AUBURN, AL, April 16, 2020 – USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) today announced that it is investing \$1 million in Alabama for a partner-driven conservation project through its Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). NRCS will leverage \$1,000,235 in partner contributions in Alabama.

“I’m excited to announce the first RCPP awards under the 2018 Farm Bill,” said Ben Malone, State Conservationist in Alabama. “Through collaboration and aligning our resources toward a common goal, we’re making an impact for natural resource conservation that could never have been realized on our own.”

RCPP uses a partner-driven approach to fund innovative solutions to natural resource challenges. Through RCPP, NRCS and partners work together with private landowners and producers to implement a variety of conservation activities, including land management practices and systems, short-term land rentals, conservation easements and watershed structures. The mix of conservation activities carried out under each project is dependent on a project’s goals, objectives and conservation benefits.

These projects offer impactful and measurable outcomes. They will support diverse agricultural and natural resource objectives, from helping farmers and ranchers improve water quality, by reduction of nutrients and sediment and thus protecting drinking water supplies and enhancing wildlife habitat.

In Alabama, The Nature Conservancy plans to reduce sedimentation, toxic pollution, nutrient runoff and other stresses within several waterbodies in the Black Warrior watersheds. Implementing streambank restoration practices along these targeted waterbodies will improve water quality for both unique aquatic biota and public water supply; reduce property loss for agricultural producers who own property along these waterways; and support the multi-partner goal of protecting Strategic Habitat Units (SHUs) in the state of Alabama.

-More-

[View this multimedia story for a full list of projects.](#)

Nationally, NRCS is investing \$206 million for 48 partner-driven conservation projects across 29 states, while leveraging nearly \$300 million in partner contributions.

Though RCPP was first authorized in the 2014 Farm Bill, the 2018 Farm Bill made changes to strengthen the program and simplify its rules. RCPP is now a stand-alone program with \$300 million annually available for partner-driven projects. In addition to the general RCPP projects announced today, NRCS has already awarded more than \$50 million for 18 renewals of 2014 Farm Bill projects. A separate RCPP Alternative Funding Arrangements (AFA) funding announcement is currently open until May 18, 2020.

Since 2015, RCPP has combined \$1 billion in NRCS investments with close to \$2 billion in partner dollars to implement conservation practices nationwide. There are currently 341 active RCPP projects and close to 2,000 RCPP partners.

[Read more](#) about the Regional Conservation Partnership Program.

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