

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Maine



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

USDA-NRCS invests nearly \$1.8 million in partner-driven project to protect natural resources in northern New England

BANGOR (April 17, 2020) – USDA’s Natural Resources Service (NRCS) today announced that it is investing nearly \$1.8 million in Maine for a partner-driven conservation project titled “Northern Tier Stream Restoration and Resilience” through its Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP).

NRCS will provide \$1,795,455 in funding for the project, which will be matched by lead partner [Trout Unlimited](#), and other project partners.

Under the “Northern Tier Stream and Restoration and Resilience” project, Trout Unlimited and a diverse set of partners plan will work to improve in-stream habitat in high priority brook trout and Atlantic salmon watersheds in Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont. The project is expected to restore habitat on up to 25 miles of streams each year.

Other partners involved in this project include: [Appalachian Mountain Club](#); [Project SHARE](#); [Redstart Inc.](#); [New Hampshire Fish and Game](#); and [Maine Coast Heritage Trust](#).

“This is an important addition to our [RCPP projects](#) here in Maine and across northern New England,” said NRCS-Maine State Conservationist Juan Hernandez. “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, soil health and drought resiliency to protecting drinking water supplies and enhancing wildlife habitat.

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 this week, 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.

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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