

# 2018 Farm Bill



USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Washington State

# Farm Bill Information Session

2020



# Farm Bill Information Session Agenda

2020



- 10 min      **Opening/Introductions  
-Roylene Comes At Night**
  
- 10 min      **Draft Timelines for NRCS programs**
  
- 15 min      **Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool (CART)**
  
- 30 min      **Changes to Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)  
and Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**
  
- 10 min      **90% Payment Schedule (Top 10 Practices)**
  
- 60 min       **FSA Eligibility Requirements**  
 **Conservation Planning Summary Intake Form**  
 **EQIP Screening Tool**
  
- 30 min      **Question and Answer**

TAB 1

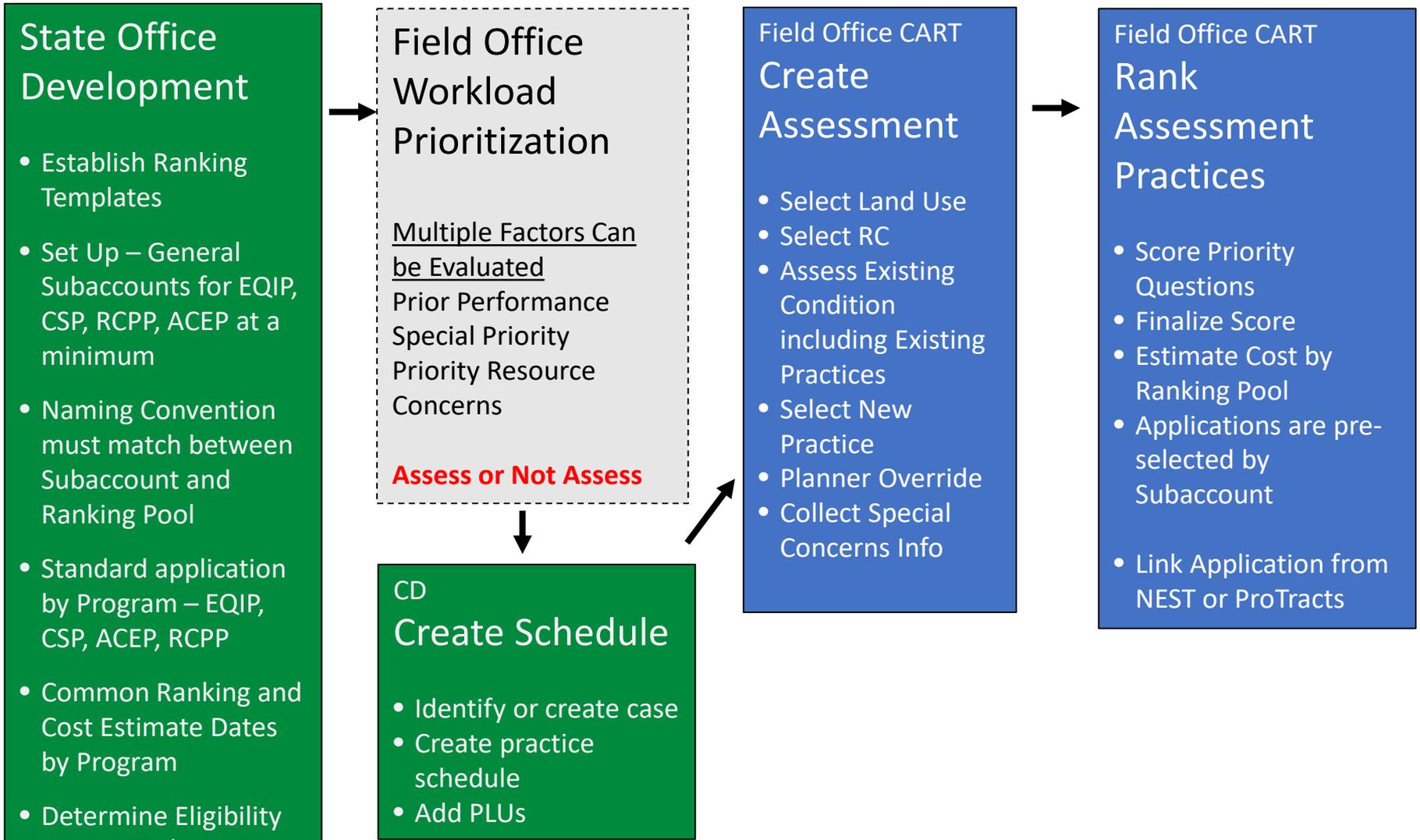
Contracting Timelines  
for NRCS Programs



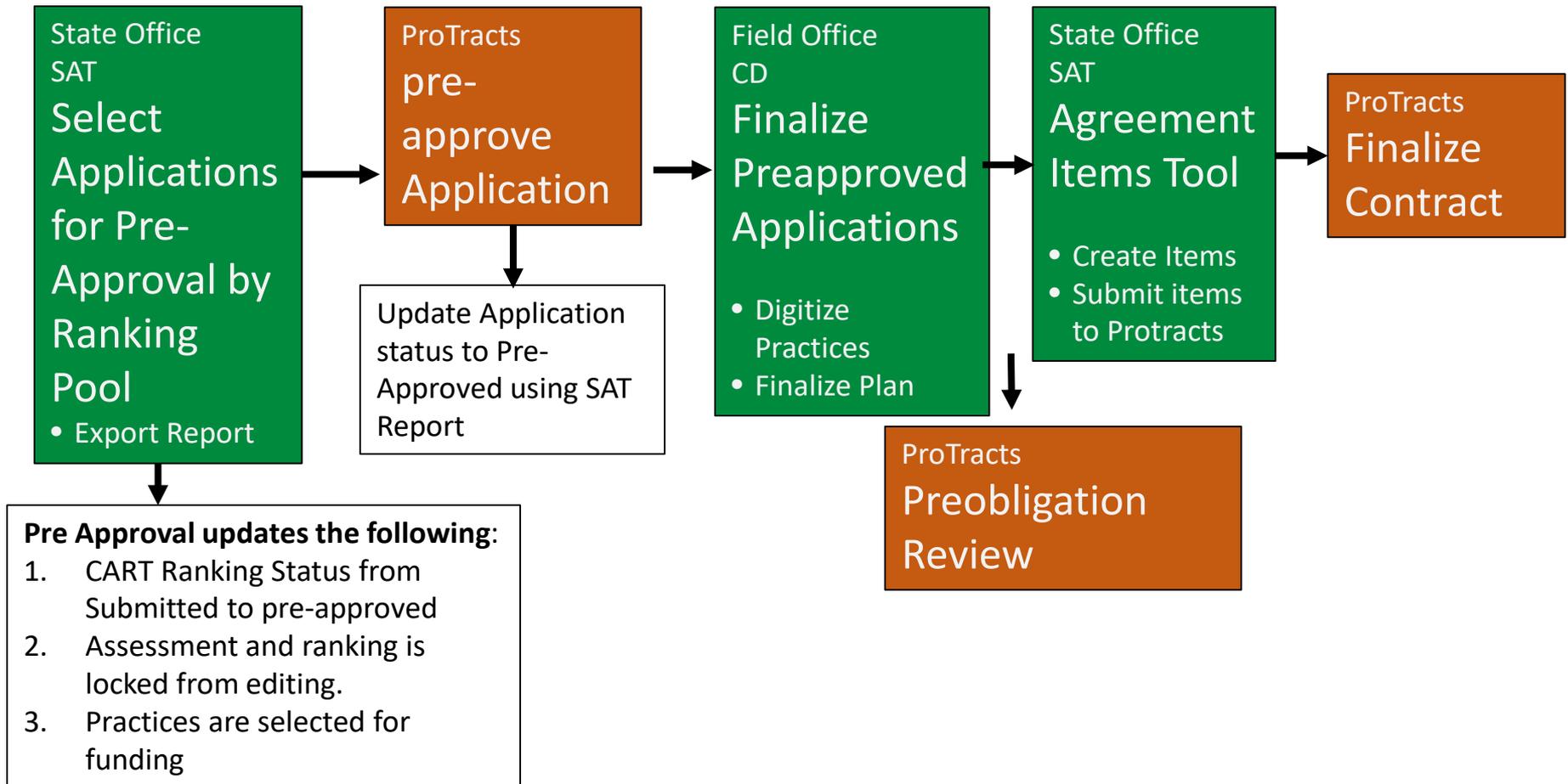
# Contracting Timelines

Keith Griswold  
ASTC-P, WA

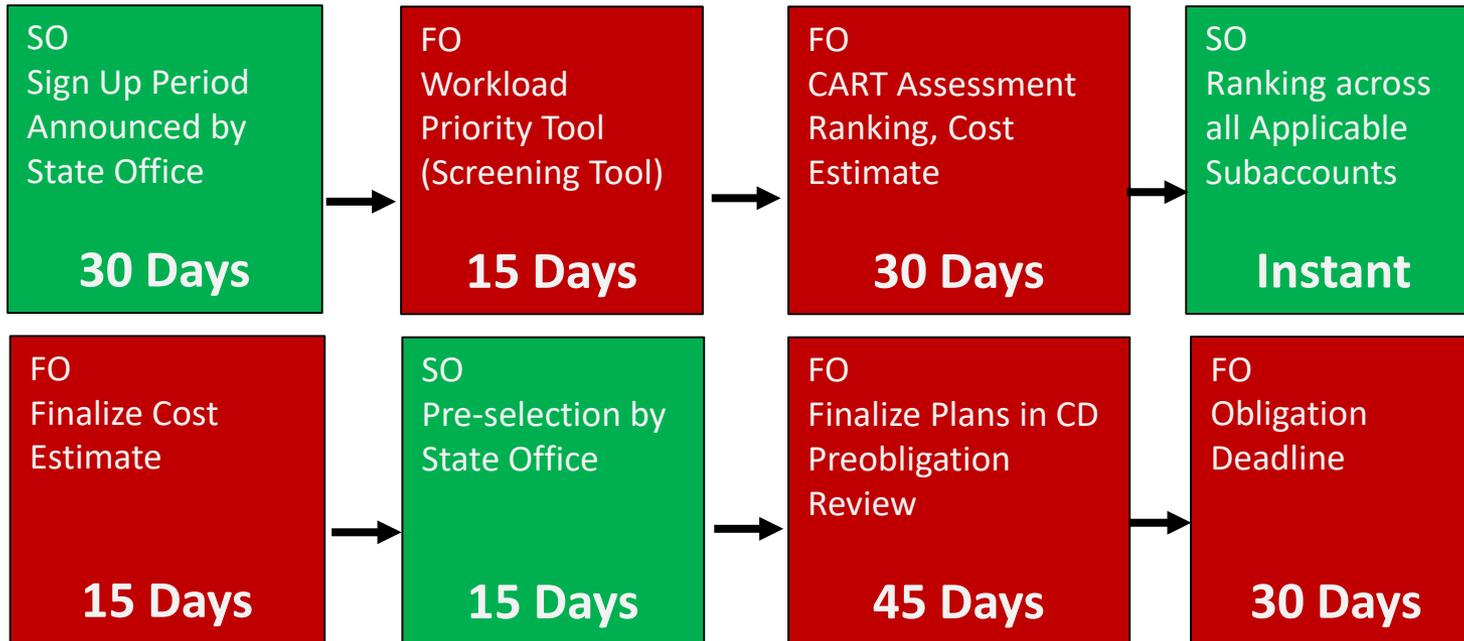
# Application Workflow



# Application Workflow



# Optimal Timeline



## TAB **2**

# Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool (CART)



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

# Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool (CART)

Keith Griswold

Assistant State Conservationist for Programs



Why is NRCS changing to CART?



# Customer requests, Congress, and Secretary of Agriculture

## 2018 Farm Bill =>

- Streamline
- 16-times

## *Streamlining*

## USDA Secretary =>

- Streamline Programs
- Increase Efficiency
- Improve Customer Service



## NRCS Chief Priorities =>

- Implement 2018 Farm Bill
- Streamline our process and program delivery
- Improve Customer Service

Customers/Partners/Field Offices/NRCS of Future =>  
Simplify - Streamline



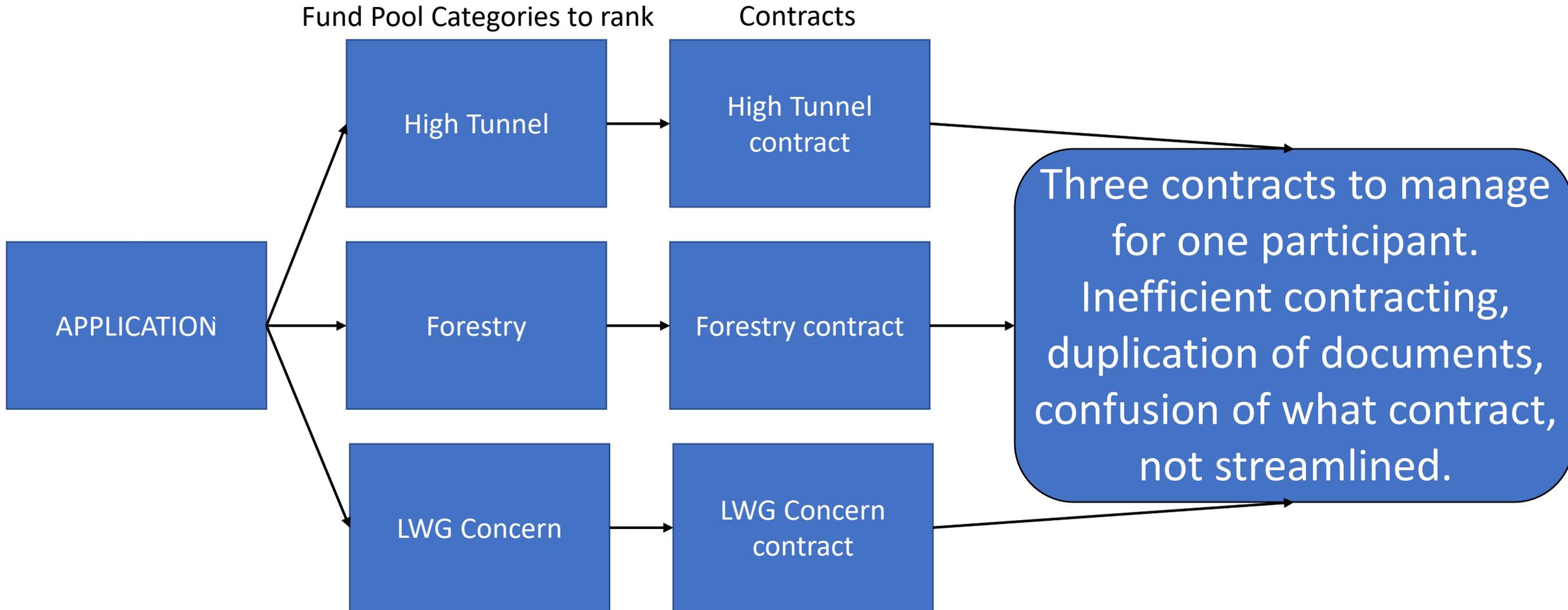
How did AERT work for contracting?



For every AERT fund pool applied for, on average 55 questions had to be answered by NRCS staff.

National Priorities Addressed	
Issue Questions	Responses
If the application is for development of a Conservation Activity Plan (CAP), the agency will assign significant ranking priority and conservation benefit by answering "Yes" to the following question. Answering "Yes" to question 1a will result in the application being awarded the maximum amount of points that can be earned for the national priority category.	
1. a. Is the program application to support the development of a Conservation Activity Plan (CAP)? If answer is "Yes", do not answer any other national level questions. If answer is "No", proceed with evaluation to address the remaining questions in this section.	Yes <input type="radio"/> or No <input type="radio"/>
Water Quality Degradation – Will the proposed project improve water quality by: (select all that apply)	
2. a. Implementing the practices in a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP)?	Yes <input type="radio"/> or No <input type="radio"/>
2. b. Implementing the practices in a Nutrient Management Plan (NMP)?	Yes <input type="radio"/> or No <input type="radio"/>
2. c. Reducing impacts from sediment, nutrients, salinity, or pesticides on land adjoining a designated "impaired water body" (TMDL, 303d listed waterbody, or other State designation)?	Yes <input type="radio"/> or No <input type="radio"/>
2. d. Reducing the impacts from sediment, nutrients, salinity, or pesticides on a non-impaired water body??"	Yes <input type="radio"/> or No <input type="radio"/>
2. e. Implementing practices that improve water quality through animal mortality and carcass management?	Yes <input type="radio"/> or No <input type="radio"/>
Water Conservation – Will the proposed project conserve water by: (select all that apply)	
3. a. Implementing irrigation practices that reduce aquifer overdraft.	Yes <input type="radio"/> or No <input type="radio"/>
3. b. Implementing irrigation practices that reduce on-farm water use?	Yes <input type="radio"/> or No <input type="radio"/>
3. c. Implementing practices in areas where the applicant participates in a geographically established or watershed-wide project?	Yes <input type="radio"/> or No <input type="radio"/>
3. d. Implementing practices that reduce on-farm water use as a result of changing to crops with lower water consumptive use, the rotation of crops, or the modification of cultural operations?	Yes <input type="radio"/> or No <input type="radio"/>
Air Quality - Will the proposed project improve air quality by: (select all that apply)	
4. a. Meeting on-farm regulatory requirements relating to air quality or proactively avoid the need for regulatory measures?	Yes <input type="radio"/> or No <input type="radio"/>
4. b. Implementing practices that reduce on-farm emissions of particulate matter (PM2.5, PM10)?	Yes <input type="radio"/> or No <input type="radio"/>
4. c. Implementing practices that reduce on-farm generated greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide (CO2), methane (CH4), and nitrous oxide (N2O)?	Yes <input type="radio"/> or No <input type="radio"/>
4. d. Implementing practices that increase on-farm carbon sequestration?	Yes <input type="radio"/> or No <input type="radio"/>
Soil Health :- Will the proposed project improve soil health by: (select all that apply)	
5. a. Reduce erosion to tolerable limits (Soil "T")?	Yes <input type="radio"/> or No <input type="radio"/>
5. b. Increasing organic matter and carbon content, and improving soil tilth and structure?	Yes <input type="radio"/> or No <input type="radio"/>
Wildlife Habitat – Will the proposed project improve wildlife habitat by: (select all that apply)	
6. a. Implementing practices benefitting threatened and endangered, at-risk, candidate, or species of concern.	Yes <input type="radio"/> or No <input type="radio"/>
6. b. Implementing practices that retain wildlife and plant habitat on land exiting the Conservation	Yes <input type="radio"/> or No <input type="radio"/>

# AERT example:





How will CART work for contracting?

# Every CART fund pool questions will be asked and answered only once by NRCS staff.

**Priorities**

- Water Quality
- Water Conservaion
- Air Quality
- Soil Quality (Health)
- Wildlife Habitat
- Plant and Animal Communities
- Energy Conservation
- Special Concerns

**Risk**

High
Low
Moderate
Moderate
High
Low
Low
Low

**Ranking**

+ EQIP

- 534 Indiana General Funding Pool
- 658 National Water Quality Initiative
- 477 Hamilton Co. CD
- 1005 Little Brown Bat SWLFW

+ CSP

Lock Ranking

**Multiple Ranking Pools Ranked Simultaneously**

New Conservation Practices	Activity	Fields
Residue and Tillage Management, No-Till (329)		2
Windbreak/ Shelterbelt Establishment (380)		3
Filter Strip (393) 20 ft min width		1
Nutrient Application Form - Slow or Time Release Nitrogen Fertilizers		1,2

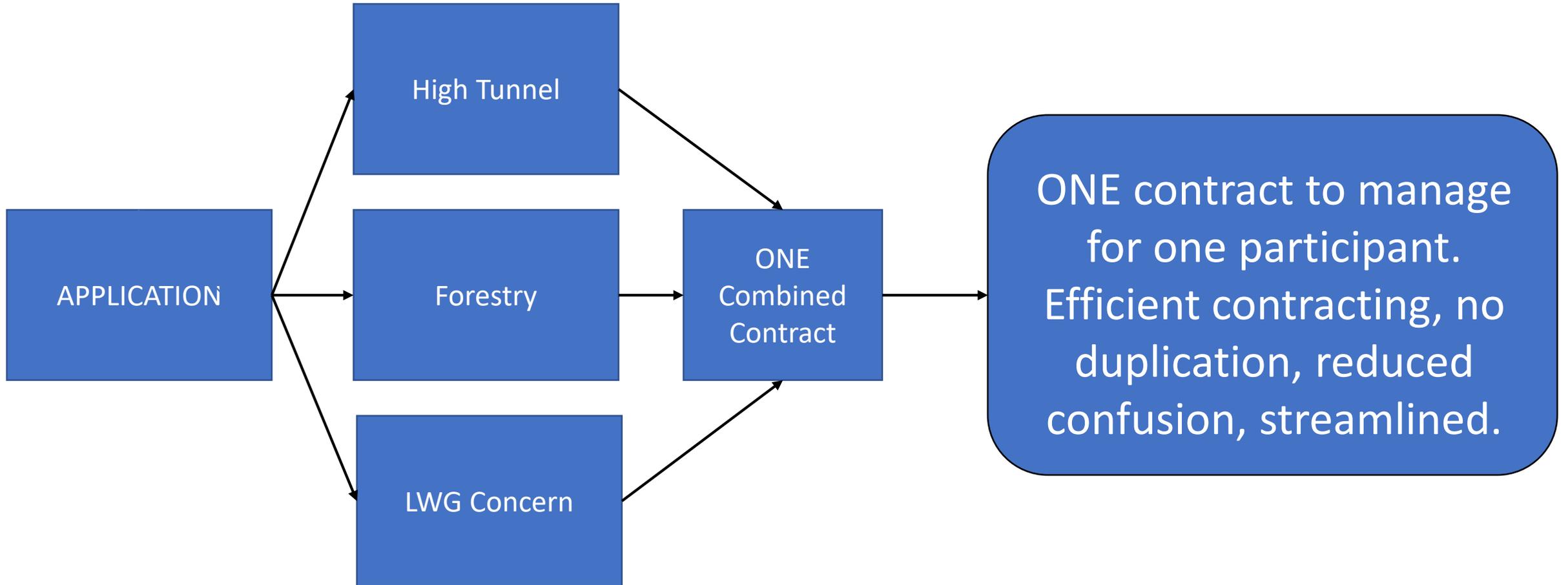
Benchmark Conservation Practices	Activity	Fields
Residue and Tillage Management, No-Till (329)		1



- CART will create a Plan Assessment of multiple conservation practices, which may be eligible under multiple Ranking Pools, then merged into ONE Contract.
- CART will assure a practice is not funded twice on the same land unit by separate funding sources
- CART eliminates > 30,000 duplicate applications nationwide
- CART eliminates repeat questions to improve efficiency (Streamline)

# CART example:

Fund Pool Categories ranked simultaneously



## TAB 3

# Changes to Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)



United States Department of Agriculture



## Landowner Farm Bill Workshop

Keith Griswold  
Assistant State  
Conservationist for Programs  
NRCS in Washington

# Changes to CSP and EQIP programs

FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION  
FSA | NRCS | RMA | Business Center

# Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) helps agricultural producers maintain and improve their existing conservation systems and adopt additional conservation activities to address priority resources concerns.

CSP is for working lands. It is the largest conservation program in the United States with 70 million acres of productive agricultural and forest land enrolled in CSP.

Participants earn CSP payments for conservation performance—the higher the performance, the higher the payment.



# CSP Changes

- Eligible participants who choose not to renew their initial CSP contract cannot compete for a new CSP contract for two years following expiration of their initial contract (§1470.26(c))
- Public land associated with other eligible lands which is under the effective control of the applicant, and which is a working component of the producer's agricultural or NIPF operation is eligible for enrollment in CSP (§1470.3 *Eligible land* definition)



# CSP Changes

- **Exception:** For farmstead and associated ag land (AAL) – As long as the applicant meets or exceeds two resource concerns at the time of contract offer they do not need to schedule an additional activity on these land uses
  - If the applicant chooses not to schedule an additional activity on farmstead or AAL, they will not receive an existing activity payment for that land use



# CSP Changes

- For CSP renewal applications, an applicant must, by the end of the renewal contract period—
  - Agree to meet or exceed the stewardship threshold of at least two additional priority resource concerns on the ag operation; or
  - Implement new or improve existing conservation activities to achieve higher levels of conservation performance for a minimum of two priority resource concerns met or exceeded in the initial contract



# CSP Changes

- Comprehensive Conservation Plan. A plan that meets or exceeds the stewardship threshold for each priority resource concern across all land uses included in the operation.
- A person or legal entity may not receive, directly or indirectly, payments that in the aggregate exceed \$200,000 for all CSP contracts originally obligated during fiscal years 2019 through 2023 (§1470.24(g))
- Removed the \$40,000 annual payment limitation



# Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary program that provides financial assistance to growers and landowners who want to install measures to protect the soil, water, air, and other natural resources on their working land.

EQIP provides funding and professional expertise for measures that protect natural resources while ensuring sustainable production on farms, ranches and working forest land.

Payments are made to participants after conservation practices and activities identified in an EQIP plan of operations are implemented.



# EQIP changes

## Water Management Entities –

- New term to describe “certain entities” under the new Water Conservation and Irrigation Efficiency provision
- Means *a state irrigation district, groundwater management district, acequia, land grant—merced, or similar entity that has jurisdiction or responsibilities related to water delivery or management to eligible lands*



# EQIP changes

**Source water protection** – protection of drinking water by implementing practices where those waters can be protected or improved.

- Practices must address water quality and / or water quantity concerns that target identified threats to community water systems
- States may offer increased incentives and up to 90% payment rates within the identified priority area



# EQIP changes

## Historically underserved and Veteran applicants –

- Eligible for increased payment rate
- Advance payment

## Veteran Preference –

- New Veteran Definition includes veterans who have been discharged in most recent 10-year period
- Veteran's preference in BFR or SDFR ranking pools
- VFR evaluated in other ranking pools:
  - may receive higher payment rate
  - may elect to receive AP
  - Are not provided preference points



# EQIP changes

## Advance Payments—Farm Bill 2018:

- Authorizes at least 50% of practice payment to Historically Underserved Participant (HUP) for materials or services
- NRCS must notify HUP of Advanced Payment (AP) availability
- NRCS must document AP election on a CIN basis
- AP funds must be expended within 90 days of receipt. Receipts of CIN materials purchased, receipt of hired labor.
- AP practices must be completed as scheduled in plan of operation



# EQIP changes

- Historically Underserved Participants

Limited Resource Farmer/Rancher:

Beginning Farmer/Rancher:

Socially Disadvantaged:

Veteran Farmer/Rancher:

Date When Discharged:



# EQIP changes

- FB 2018 Payment limitations:
  - Aggregate payments cannot exceed \$450K
  - Payment limitation is not cumulative with prior FB's
  - Organic payment limitation (NOI) increased from \$80K to \$140K with no annual payment limitation
- Contract limitations:
  - \$450K contract limit with a person or legal entity
  - New: Joint operations and group projects may be eligible for \$900K contract limit





United States Department of Agriculture

# QUESTIONS?



## TAB **4**

### 90% Payment Schedule (Top 10 Practices)



United States Department of Agriculture



## Landowner Farm Bill Workshop

Keith Griswold  
Assistant State  
Conservationist for Programs  
NRCS in Washington

# 90% Payment Schedule (Top Ten Practices)

FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION  
FSA | NRCS | RMA | Business Center

# New Farm Bill Opportunities

- The 2018 Farm Bill created new opportunities for our participants to increase adoption of conservation practices.
- 90% Payment Schedule aka (Top Ten)



# 90% Payment Schedule (Top Ten)

- The Farm Bill authorizes increased payments for certain practices deemed more environmentally beneficial, as determined by each state in consultation with the State Technical Committee.
- The goal of these increased payments is to make these practices more attractive to producers to increase their adoption. This increased payment schedule at 90% is available to **ALL** contract participants.



# 90% Payment Schedule (Top Ten)

These practices must address specific causes:

- impairment relating to excessive nutrients in groundwater or surface water,
- address the conservation of water to advance drought mitigation and declining aquifers,
- meet other environmental priorities and other priority resource concerns identified in habitat or other area restoration plans,
- or be geographically targeted to address a natural resource concern in a specific watershed.



# WA Proposed Top Ten Practices

Practices “bundled” to get the highest adoption meeting the intent of the Farm Bill.

- T&E (396 Aquatic Organism Passage, 645 Upland Wildlife Habitat Management, 391 Riparian Forest Buffer)
- Forest Health/Wildfire Risk Reduction (666 Forest Stand Improvement, 612 Tree/Shrub Establishment)
- Water Quality (313 Waste Storage Facility, 386 Field Border)
- Soil Health (340 Cover Crop, 329 Residue and Tillage Management, No-Till, 327 Conservation Cover).



## TAB 5

- FSA Eligibility Requirements
  - Conservation Planning Intake Summary
  - EQIP Screening Tool



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# FSA Eligibility Requirements, Conservation Planning Intake Summary, EQIP Screening Tool

FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION  
FSA | NRCS | RMA | Business Center

# FSA Eligibility Requirement

For all USDA programs, Farm Service Agency (FSA) eligibility requirements must be met:

- AD1026
- Farm and Tract eligibility (FTE)
- Adjusted Gross Income (AGI)



# FSA Eligibility Requirement

In Protracts, FSA eligibility shows up on the participants information page.

Any “N” listed below on any one of these three requirements will keep your application in “pending status and will not be processed for contracting

<b>AD-1026:</b>	Y
<b>FTE:</b>	Y
<b>AGI:</b>	Y



# Conservation Planning Intake Summary

For FY20, WA NRCS is utilizing a data collection tool in order to help process EQIP applications due to the reduced contracting season this year.

Failure to complete and turn in the Conservation Planning Intake Summary will result in a “medium” screening for application management.



# 2018 Farm Bill



USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Washington State

## Conservation Planning Intake Summary



January 2020





# Statewide EQIP Screening Tool



Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)  
Fiscal Year 2020  
Statewide Screening Worksheet

**A Screening Worksheet must be completed for each eligible EQIP application.**

Applicant Name:	Date: <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/>
Evaluator Name:	Application Number: 74054620 <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>

EQIP is a competitive financial assistance program. Applications are screened and ranked based on the expected conservation benefits of planned practices in the EQIP schedule of operations. This screening worksheet must be completed for each eligible applicant applying for financial assistance. **If participant(s) are not FSA eligible, STOP. Do not screen participant until FSA eligibility has been met.**

Applications are accepted on a continuous basis; however, application cutoff periods are established for purposes of ranking and funding decisions. A screening worksheet will be processed for each application. The goal of this screening tool is to ensure that conservation technical assistance and EQIP program benefits are managed efficiently to address priority conservation needs. Completion of this worksheet and documentation does not constitute an agreement to provide EQIP program benefits nor approval of a program contract. The original screening worksheet should be filed with the applicant case file or EQIP program file unless the application is determined to be ineligible, the screening priority (High, Medium, or Low) must be recorded in ProTracts. A copy of any completed screening worksheet will be provided to the applicant upon request. **Conservation Planning priority and/or CART Ranking will only occur on High screened applications.**



# Statewide EQIP Screening Tool

<p>If any bullet is answered YES, screen <b>Low Priority</b> status in ProTracts. Do not proceed with medium priority question.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the last 3 EQIP program fiscal years, did the applicant have any NRCS contract terminated for cause?</li> <li>• Does the Applicant have an active contract, and any CIN is not on schedule greater than 12 months, and is not due to NRCS error or delay?</li> <li>• Is the Applicant on an active NRCS-CPA-153 and is still out of compliance?</li> <li>• Applicant has any existing EQIP contract (active, completed, terminated, canceled), and the applicant did not meet the O&amp;M requirements for the lifespan of the conservation practice previously funded through EQIP?</li> </ul>
<p>If bullet is YES, screen as <b>Medium Priority</b> status in ProTracts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicant did not turn in the Producer Intake Form or form was not completely filled out.</li> </ul>
<p>If all of the above bullets were answered NO, screen application as <b>HIGH PRIORITY</b></p>	
<p><b>Application Screening Priority:</b> <input type="radio"/> LOW <input type="radio"/> MEDIUM <input type="radio"/> HIGH</p>	
<p>District Conservationist Approval Signature &amp; Date:</p>	<div style="background-color: #e0e0ff; height: 60px; width: 100%;"></div>





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# QUESTIONS?

