



United States Department of Agriculture

○ Conservation Programs

*FY2020 Programs Update –
CSP, EQIP, ACEP, RCPP, CIG*

*FY2021 Local Work Group
Recommendations*



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Conservation Stewardship Program



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Conservation Stewardship Program - Nebraska

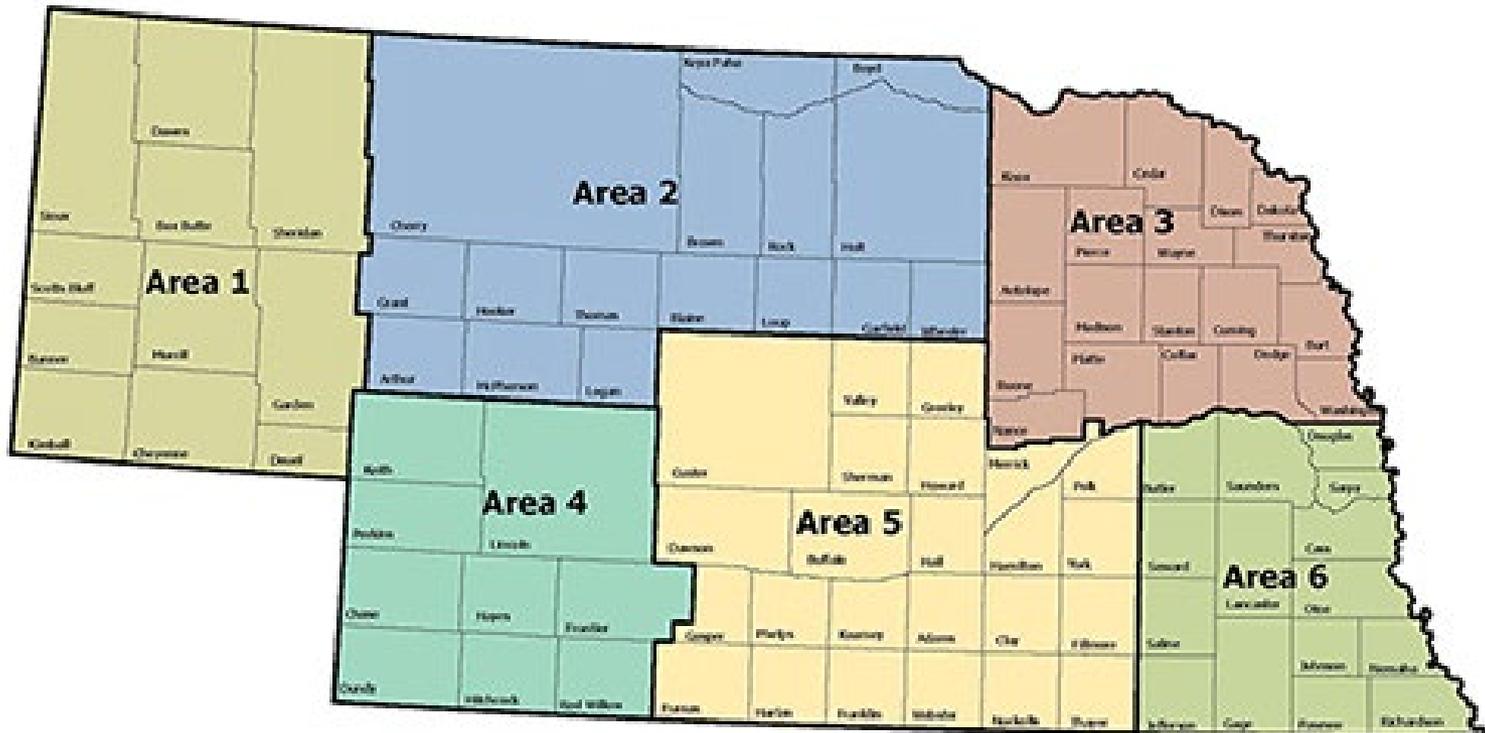
- **FY2020 Allocations**
 - CSP Classic = \$10 Million
 - CSP Renewal = \$8.6 Million
 - CSP-Grassland Conservation Initiative = \$3.4 Million
- **Results of 2020 GCI signups**
 - New contracts = 199
 - Contract acres = 10,425
- **Results of 2020-1 Renewal signup**
 - Applications = 258
 - Contracts = 96
 - Contract acres = 180,000

Conservation Stewardship Program - Nebraska

- 2020 CSP Classic Signup
 - Application deadline was May 29
 - Applications = 910
 - Workload Prioritization Tool will allow efficient processing of applications
 - Assessment and ranking by July 10

Conservation Stewardship Program - Nebraska

- 2020 CSP Classic Signup Priority Resource Concern Categories



Ranking Pool Priority RCC

- **Pool 1**

- Livestock Production Limitation
- Field Sediment, Nutrient, and Pathogen Loss
- Source Water Depletion
- Terrestrial Habitat
- Wind and Water Erosion

- **Pool 2**

- Livestock Production Limitation
- Field Sediment, Nutrient, and Pathogen Loss
- Soil Quality Limitation
- Terrestrial Habitat
- Wind and Water Erosion

Ranking Pool Priority RCC

- **Pool 3**

- Livestock Production Limitation
- Field Sediment, Nutrient, and Pathogen Loss
- Soil Quality Limitation
- Terrestrial Habitat
- Wind and Water Erosion

- **Pool 4**

- Livestock Production Limitation
- Field Sediment, Nutrient, and Pathogen Loss
- Source Water Depletion
- Terrestrial Habitat
- Wind and Water Erosion

Ranking Pool Priority RCC

- **Pool 5**

- Field Sediment, Nutrient, and Pathogen Loss
- Soil Quality Limitation
- Source Water Depletion
- Terrestrial Habitat
- Wind and Water Erosion

- **Pool 6**

- Livestock Production Limitation
- Field Sediment, Nutrient, and Pathogen Loss
- Soil Quality Limitation
- Terrestrial Habitat
- Wind and Water Erosion

Ranking Pool Priority RCC

- Organic
 - Degraded Plant Condition
 - Pest Pressure
 - Field Pesticide Loss
 - Soil Quality Limitation
 - Terrestrial Habitat
- NIPF
 - Degraded Plant Condition
 - Fire Management
 - Pest Pressure
 - Terrestrial Habitat
 - Concentrated Erosion



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Environmental Quality Incentives Program





EQIP Allocation FY2020

2020 Mandatory Distribution

- Source Water Protection – 10%
- Wildlife Initiative – 10%
- Historically Underserved – 10%
- Livestock – 50%

FY2020 STATEWIDE FUND POOLS

- Seasonal High Tunnel
- Organic
- Energy
- Conservation Activity Plans
- Animal Feeding Operations
- Tribal
- HEL Treatment

FY2020 PARTNERSHIP FUND POOLS

- National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI)
 - 4 Projects = \$1.3 million
- Water Smart (Bureau of Reclamation)
 - 1 Project – URNRD = \$150,000
- Forest Service (Joint Chiefs)
 - 1 Project – UNWNRD, MNNRD, ULNRD = \$342,000

- **FY2020 General EQIP Allocation = \$23 Million**
 - Local Work Groups = \$14 Million
 - Wildlife (10%) = \$2.3 Million
 - Historically Underserved (10%) = \$2.3 Million
 - Source Water Protection (10%) = \$2.3 Million
 - Animal Feeding Operations = \$1.0 Million
 - HEL Treatment = \$500,000
 - Conservation Activity Plans = \$200,000
 - Working Lands for Wildlife = \$100,000
 - High Tunnels = \$100,000
 - Organic = \$100,000
 - Tribal = \$100,000
 - Energy = \$25,000

ANIMAL MORTALITY MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE

- Provides assistance to livestock producers for animal mortality disposal resulting from impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic
- Application cutoff dates:
 - May 11, 2020
 - June 1, 2020
 - June 22, 2020
 - Additional dates TBD



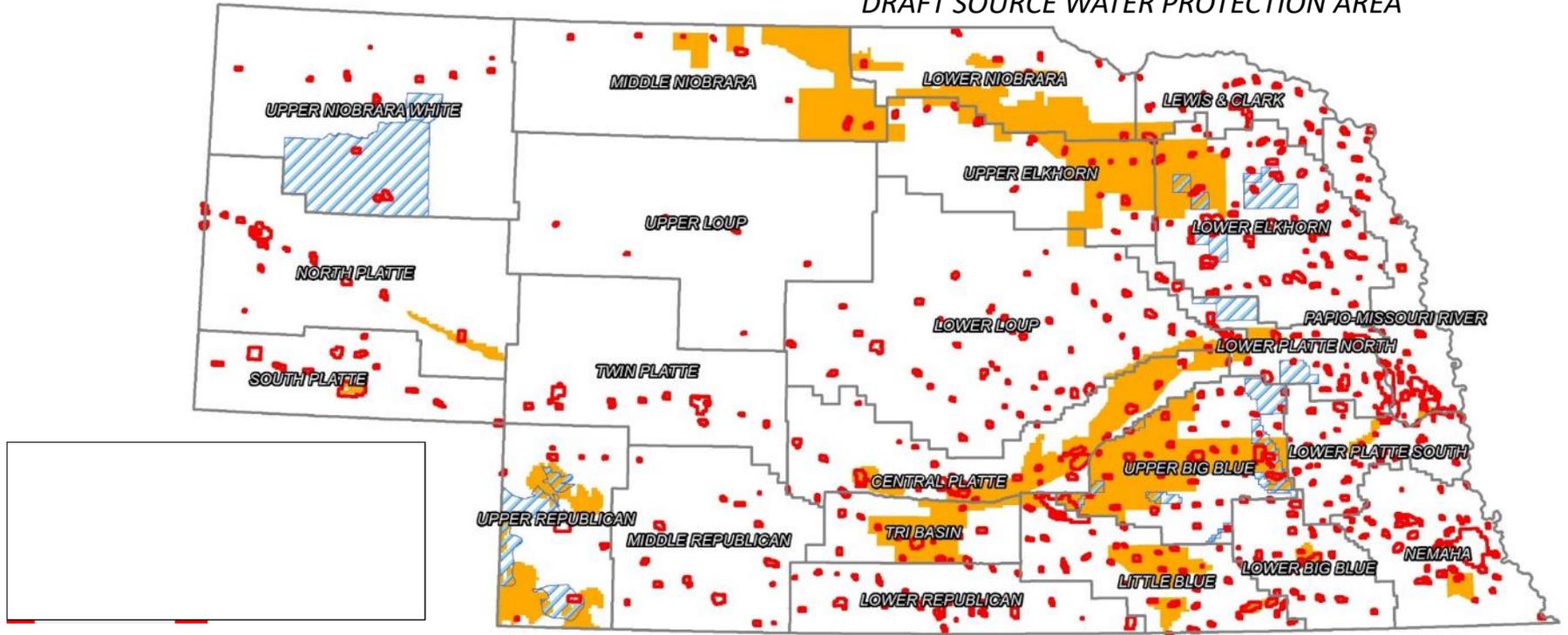
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Source Water Protection

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DRAFT SOURCE WATER PROTECTION AREA



The Phase 2-4 and Quantity Management Areas that intersect a Wellhead Protection Area define the medium priority level.

Total Medium & High Priority Areas: 8,006,050 acres

Source Water Protection Practice List

* Practices with potential up to 90% c/s rate

- 327 - Conservation Cover
- *328 - Conservation Crop Rotation
- 332 - Contour Buffer Strips
- *340 - Cover Crop
- 342 - Critical Area Planting
- 355 - Well Water Testing
- 386 - Field Border
- 390 - Riparian Herbaceous Cover
- 391-Riparian Forest Buffer
- 393 - Filter Strip
- 412 - Grassed Waterway
- *449 - Irrigation Water Management
- *590 - Nutrient Management
- 635 - Vegetated Treatment Area
- 656 - Constructed Wetland



Source Water Protection Practice List

* Practices with potential up to 90% c/s rate

- *351 - Water Well Decommissioning
- 430 - Irrigation Pipeline
- *441 - Irrigation System, Micro irrigation
- *442 - Sprinkler System
- 512 - Forage and Biomass Planting
- 550 - Range Planting
- *595 - Integrated Pest Management
- *657 - Wetland Restoration
- 659 - Wetland Enhancement



EQIP High Priority Practices

State Conservationists, in consultation with the State Technical Committee, have the **option to select up to 10 high priority practices, which may receive increased payment rates.** A high priority practice must meet one of the following criteria:

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

***Selection of practices to receive higher payment should incentivize conservation practices that have high potential for conservation but are underutilized.**

EQIP High Priority Practices

(Maximum of 10 practices allowed)

- 328 - Conservation Crop Rotation
- 338 – Prescribed Burning
- 386 – Field Border
- 391 – Riparian Forest Buffer
- 393 – Filter Strip
- 395 – Stream Habitat Improvement or Management
- 472 – Access Control
- 590 – Nutrient Management
- 595 – Pest Management
- 657 – Wetland Restoration





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NRCS Partnership Initiatives & Grants

Core Principles:

- Innovation
- Partner Contributions
- Impact
- Partnerships & Management



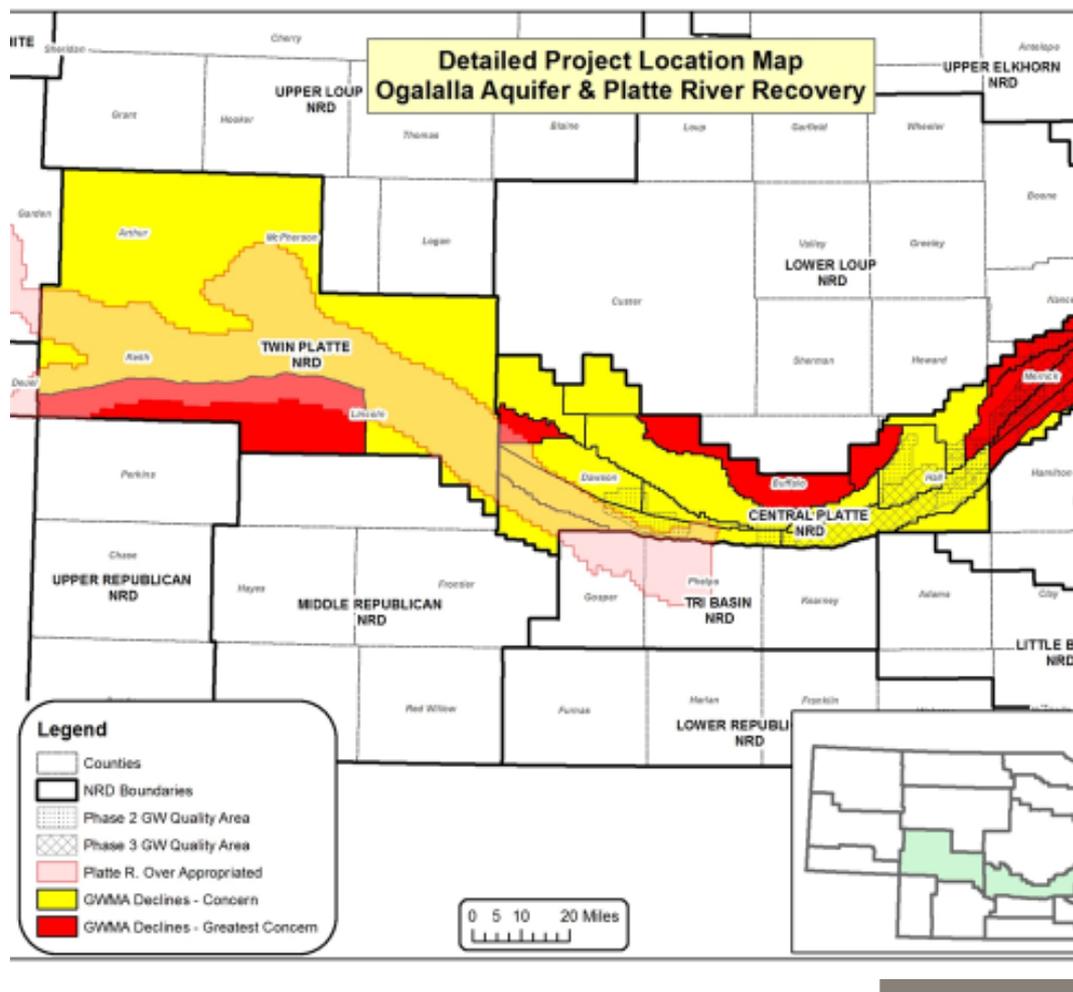
Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

- **Existing Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) projects in Nebraska**
 - **Ogallala Aquifer & Platte River Recovery – CPNRD & TPNRD**
 - **Regional Grassland Bird & Grazing Enhancement Initiative – NGPC.**
 - **Cropland Cover for Soil Health and Wildlife – NGPC**
 - **Republican Basin Conservation Partnership – LRNRD**
 - **Divots in the Pivots – UBBNRD/RWBJV**
 - **Wahoo Creek Water Quality Sites 26 & 27 – LPNNRD**
 - **Papillion Creek Site WP-1 Dam – PMRNRD**
- **New award for FY2019**
 - **Resilient Futures for Nebraska Soils – TNC, UBBNRD & CPNRD**

RCPP - Nebraska

Ogallala Aquifer & Platte River Recovery (5 Years, 2015 – 2019)

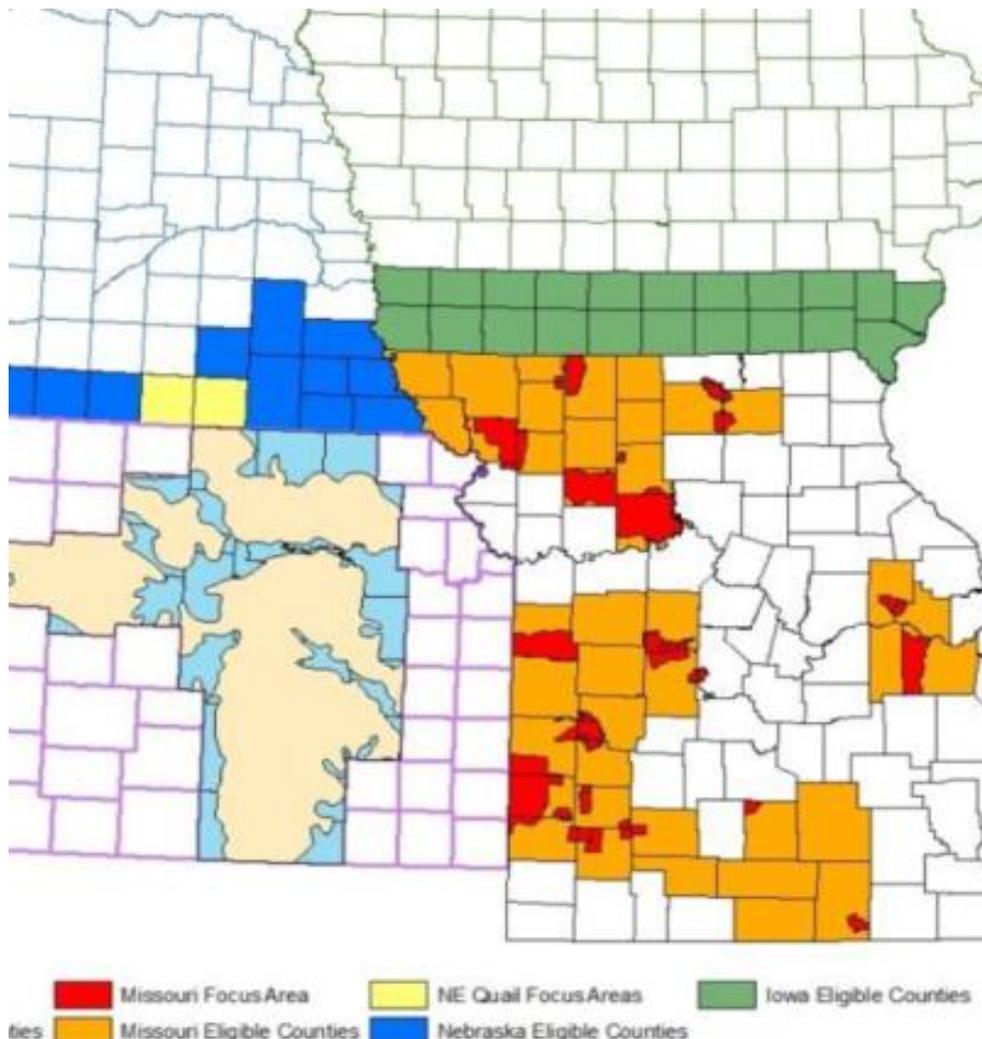
- CPNRD, TPNRD
- \$ 1.7 million
- Current balance = \$23,000
- 1 year extension approved
- Expires 05/13/2021
- Renewal Application TBD



RCPP - Nebraska

Regional Grassland Bird & Grazing Enhancement Initiative (5 years, 2015 – 2019)

- Missouri, Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa
- \$ 885,000 (Nebraska allocation)
- Current Fund Balance = \$169,000
- Application cutoff March 13th
- Expires 09/30/2020

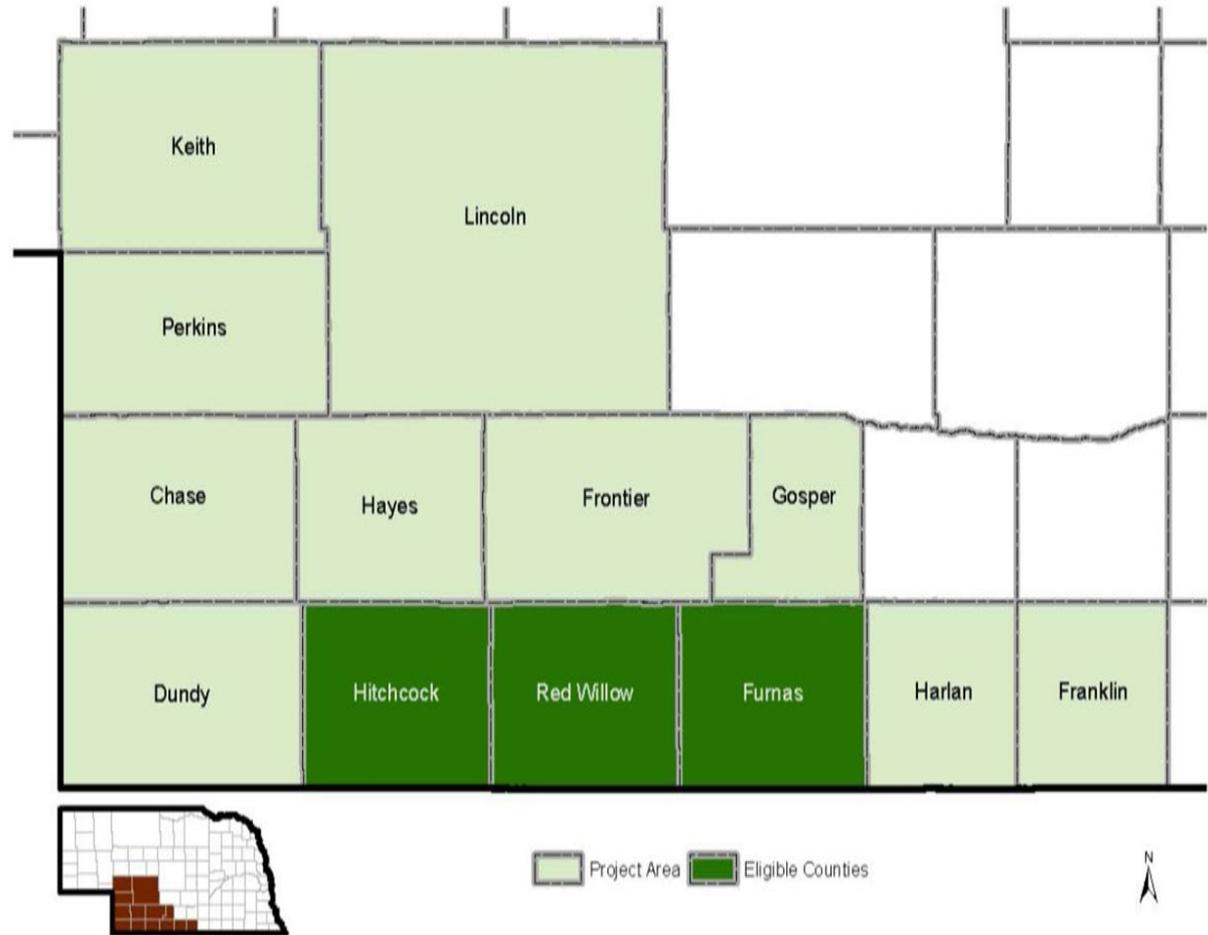


RCPP - Nebraska

Cropland Cover for Soil Health and Wildlife - 2016

– NGPC

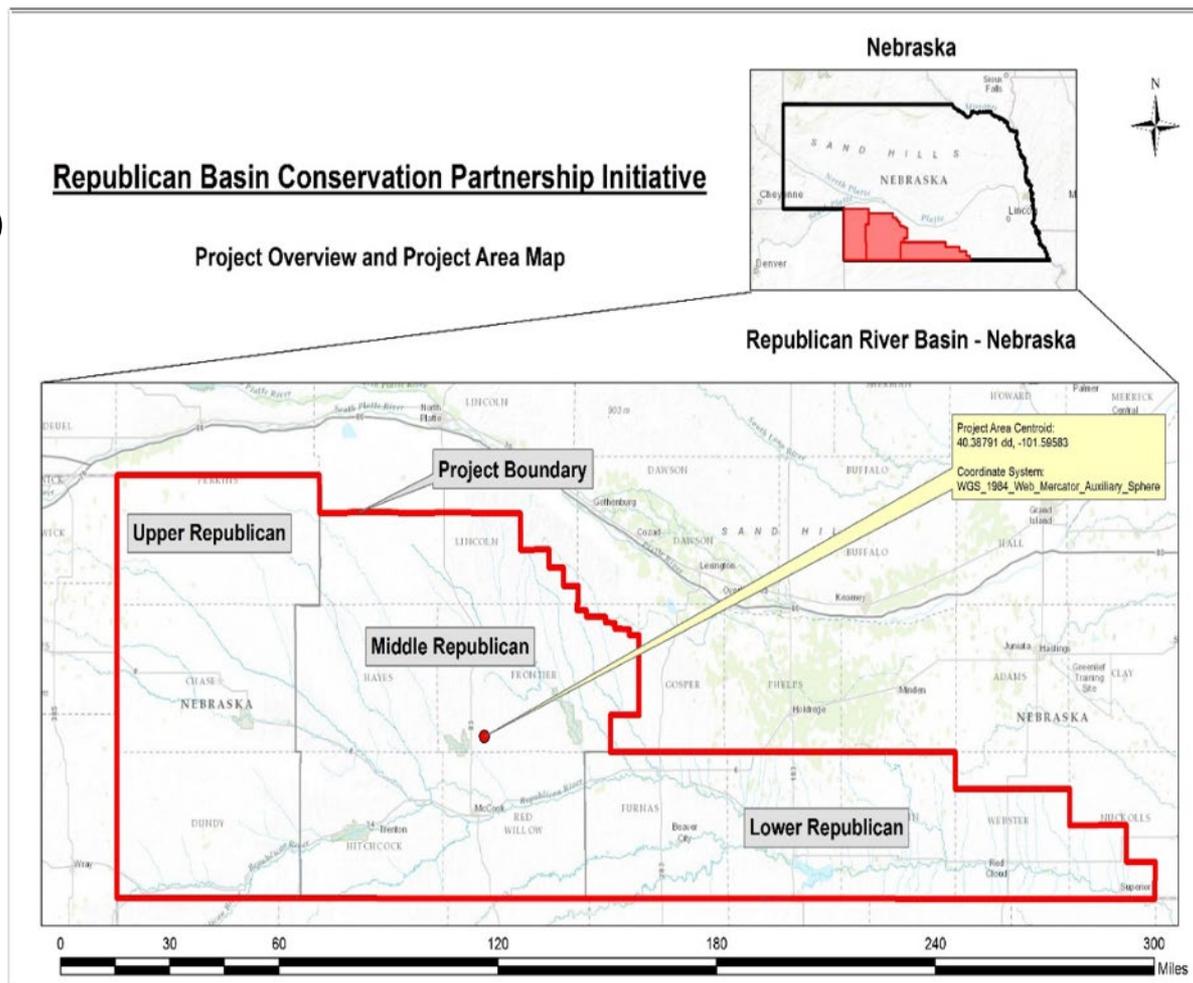
- Initial Allocation = \$700,000
- Current Balance = \$20,000
- Expires: 12/31/2020
- Approved for Renewal
(Expected Approved funds = \$700,000)
- Agreement being developed
(potential 5 years into 2025)
- Next signup in FY2021



RCPP - Nebraska

Republican Basin Conservation Partnership (2016) – LRNRD, MRNRD, URNRD

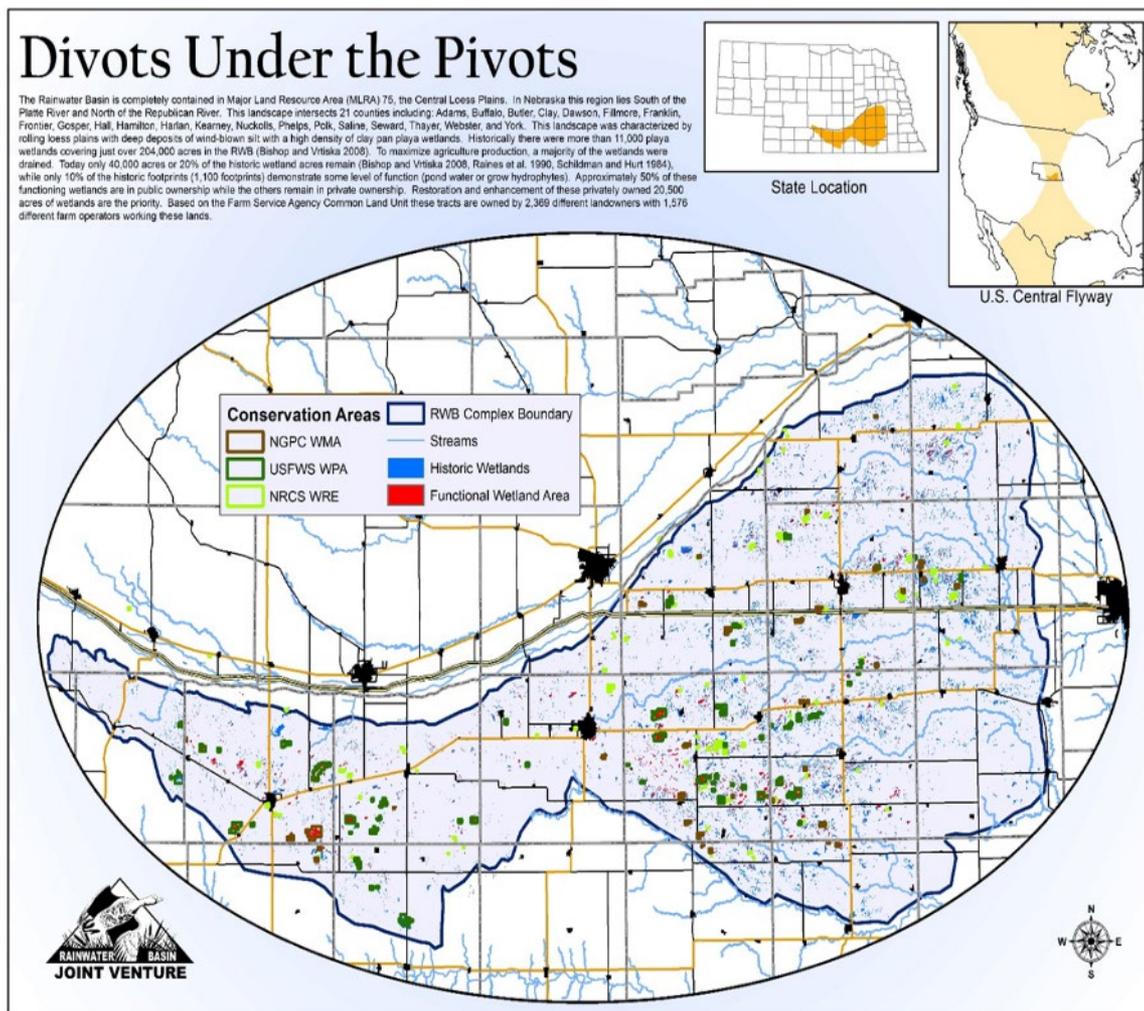
- \$2.1 million allocated
- Current balance = \$3,000
- Additional FA approved = \$500,000
- Ranking is almost completed.
- Expires: 08/08/2020



RCCP - Nebraska

Divots in the Pivots (2017)

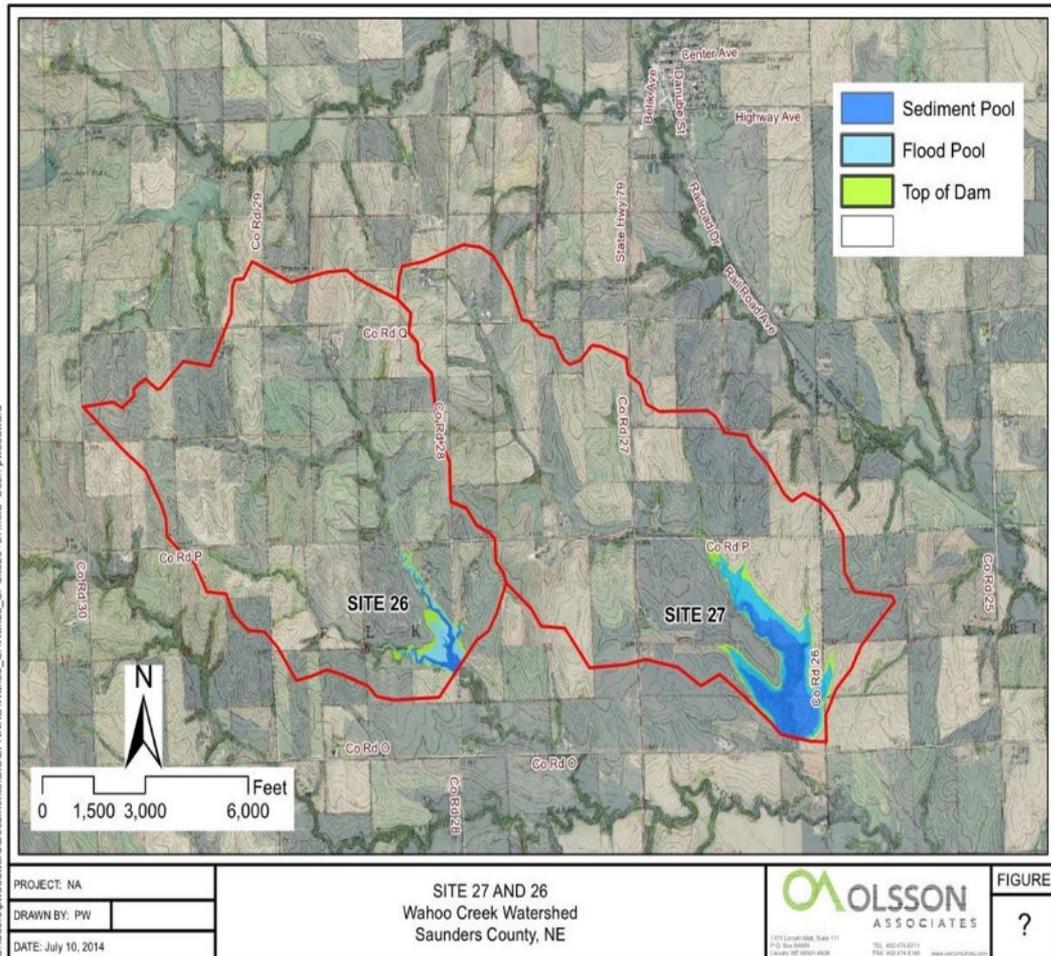
- UBBNRD and RWBJV Partners
- Combination of ACEP-ALE, ACEP-WRE and EQIP
- \$1.8 million
- Expires 09/30/2022



RCPP - Nebraska

Wahoo Creek Water Quality Sites 26 & 27 (2017)

- LPNNRD Partner
- \$1.5 million
- Active Status



RCPP - Nebraska

- **Papillion Creek Site WP-1 Dam (2018)**
 - P-MRNRD Partner
 - \$4.4 million
 - Active Status

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

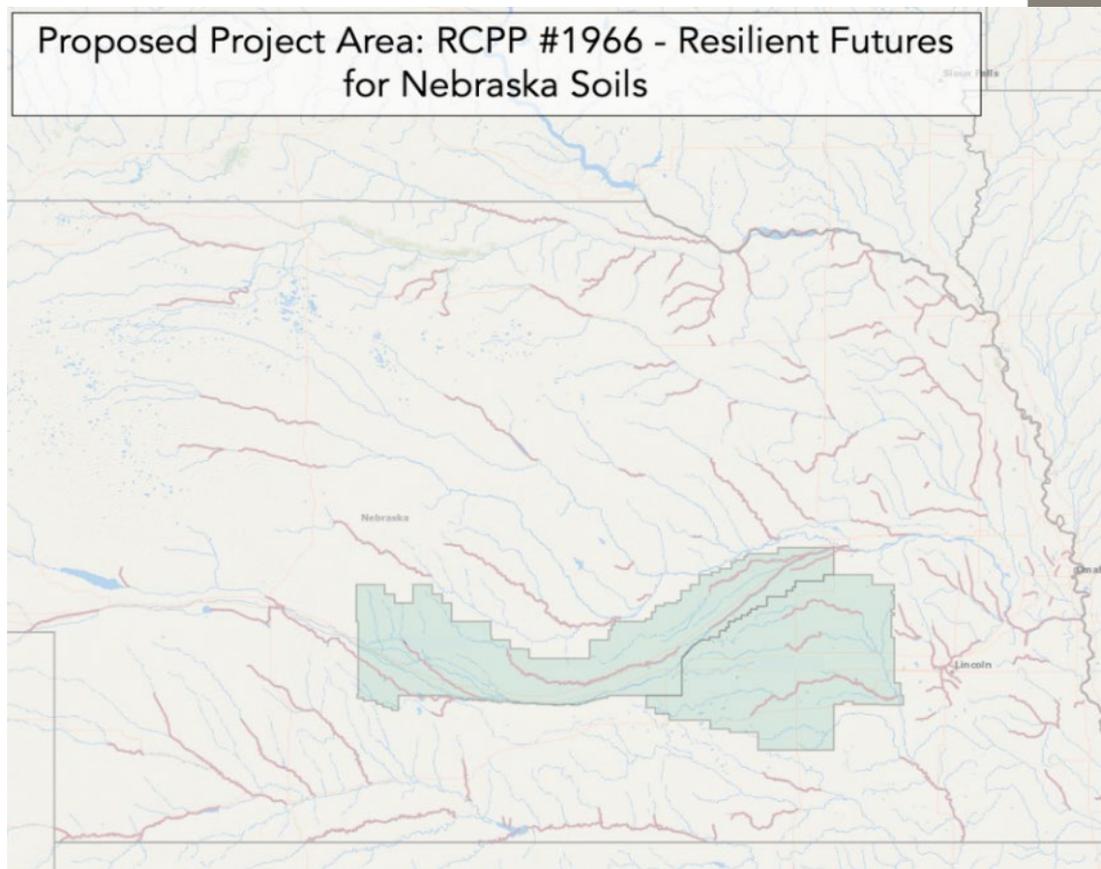
- **FY 2019 Award timeline**

- 4 proposals received involving Nebraska
- Awarded 1 RCPP project announced mid April 2020
- Programmatic Partnership Agreement (PPA) executed June/July 2020 with TNC.
- Next APF anticipated summer 2020

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

Resilient Futures for NE Soils – FY19

- TNC – Lead Partner
- ~ \$4.4 million
 - 3.1 million FA
- Negotiating – June
 - expect 5yr project



Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

- **FY 2019 Classic Award**

- **The Nature Conservancy (TNC)**

Resilient Futures for Nebraska Soils

Funding Amount: \$ 4,419,304

Partner Contributions: \$ 4,397,865

Funding Pool: State/Multi State

Critical Conservation Area (if applicable): N/A

Summary: The Nature Conservancy, supported by project partners, including two Natural Resources Districts, will help farmers in central Nebraska adopt soil health practices on an estimated 100,000 acres over five years, storing 150,000 metric tons CO₂e and preventing 375,000 tons of erosion. Alongside this traditional approach to soil health practice adoption, farmers will be connected to carbon markets and the partnership plans to rigorously report on the economic and social outcomes of the project.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

- **FY 2020 Renewal Award**
 - **Cropland Cover for Soil Health and Wildlife**
Expected to be \$700,000
- **FY 2021 Renewal Timeline**
 - **May: Notify Lead Partners via email**
 - **June: Portal application submissions** (projects that expire FY21)
 - **July: Selections by Chief**
 - **Nov/Dec: Execution of Renewal Agreements**

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

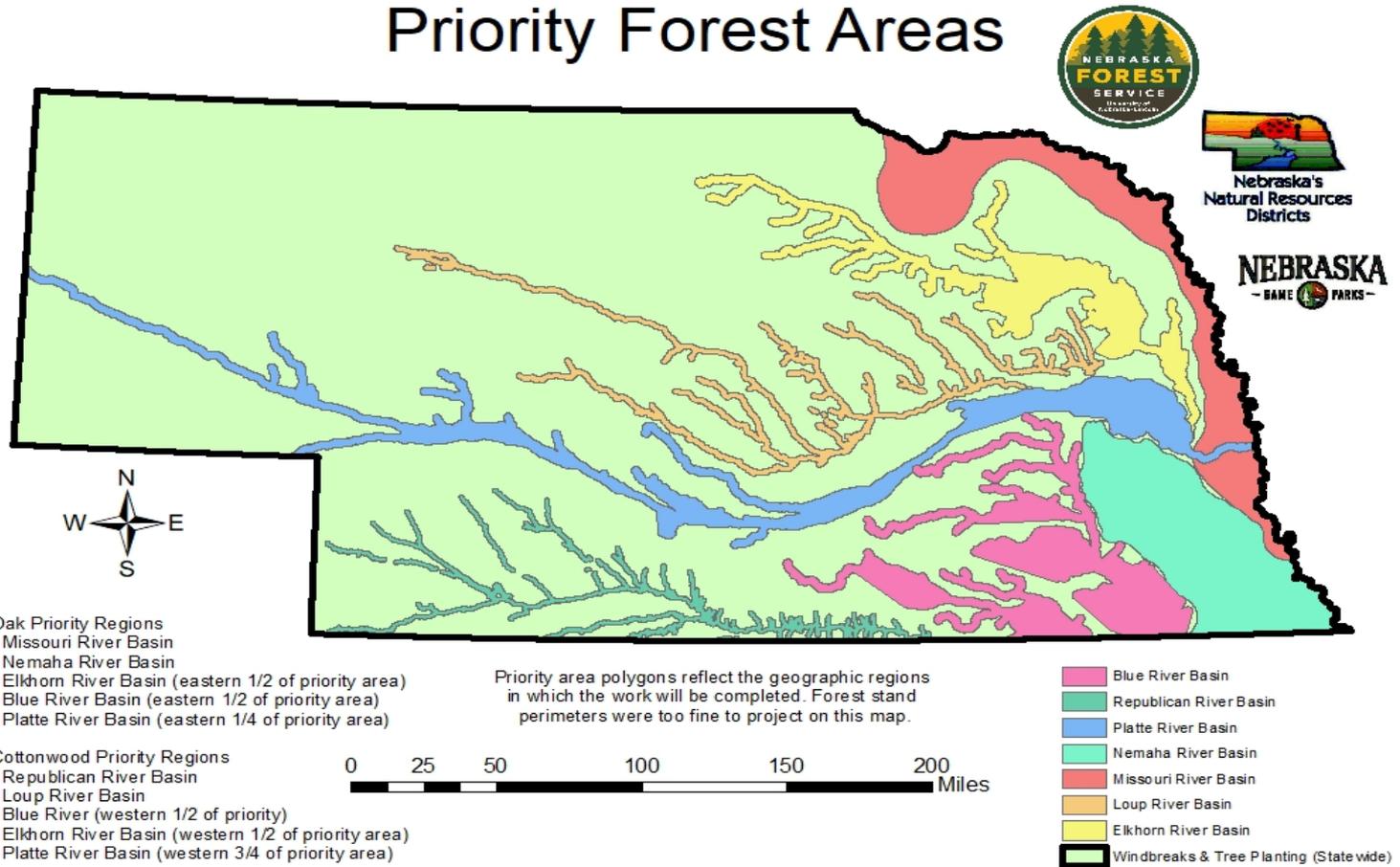
- **Proposal Deadlines**

- **RCPP-AFA – proposal due 5/29 in RCPP portal**
- **RCPP Active project renewals – 6/26 in RCPP Portal**
 - ❑ **Ogallala Aquifer & Platte River Recovery – CPNRD,**

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

- Submitted NE Proposal RCPP-AFA – (15 Projects will be funded)

Nebraska Forest Restoration Partnership Priority Forest Areas





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Delivering Results for Agriculture and Conservation



Conservation Innovation Grants



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National CIG



- Funds the development of promising approaches and technologies—which may or may not be successful!
- Funding rarely provided directly to producers
- Projects often include small-scale pilots or demonstrations
- National and State competitions



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CIG On-Farm Trials

- Funds the implementation and evaluation of innovative approaches, systems and practices that we know provide a conservation benefit.
- Funding must be provided directly to producers to offset implementation risk.
- Partners must complete both conservation and economic evaluations.
- Soil Health Demo Trial awardees must agree to use consistent assessment methods.
- National competition only.



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Conservation Innovation Grants

- **2019 On-Farm Trials funding announcement released May 15, 2019**
 - 2019 On-Farm Trials Award recipients announced November 26, 2019
 - 4 Nebraska projects approved
- **2020 On-Farm Trials proposals due 5/29/20**
- **2020 National CIG funding announcement released May 30, 2019 – proposals due 6/29/20**
 - 2020 national CIG Classic funding announcement released April 28, 2020
 - Potential applicant webinar was recorded and available on the National CIG website.



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Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program

Natural Resources Conservation Service



VPA-HIP

Voluntary Public
Access and Habitat
Incentive Program

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VOLUNTARY PUBLIC ACCESS and HABITAT INCENTIVE PROGRAM (VPA-HIP)

- Competitive Grants Program through grants.gov
- The primary objective of the VPA-HIP is to encourage owners and operators of privately-held farm, ranch, and forest land to voluntarily make that land available for access by the public for wildlife-dependent recreation, including hunting or fishing, under programs implemented by State or tribal governments.
- NE Game & Parks received this three year grant for FY21 because of the well established Open Fields & Water Program (OFW)
 - \$3,000,000 Federal Funds
 - \$500,000 Non-Federal Funds



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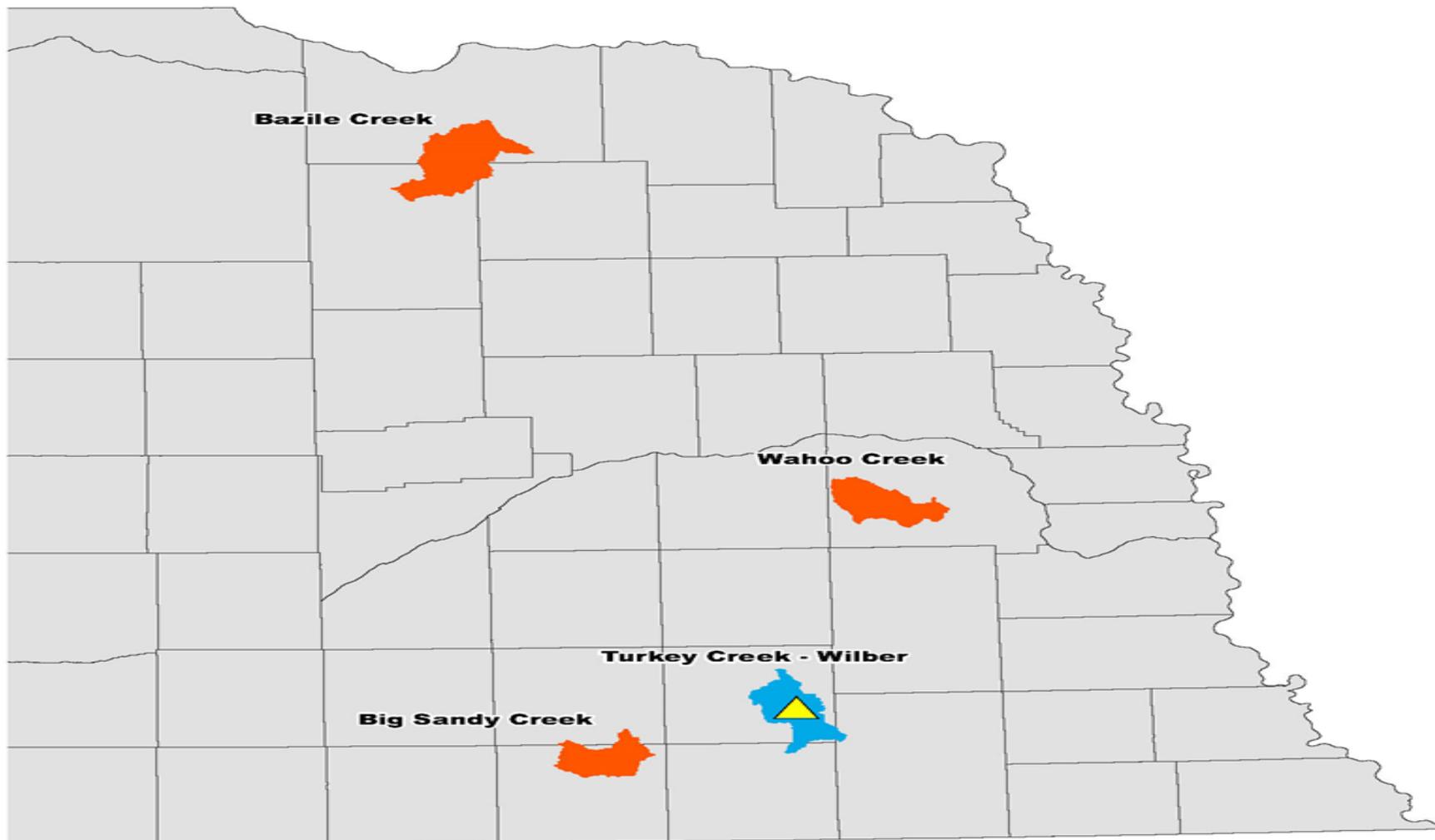


NATIONAL WATER QUALITY INITIATIVE (NWQI)

National Water Quality Initiative

- **Wahoo Creek** – Lower Platte North NRD
- **Bazile Creek** – Lower Elkhorn NRD, Lewis and Clark NRD, Upper Elkhorn NRD
- **Big Sandy Creek** – Little Blue NRD
- **Turkey Creek** – Lower Big Blue NRD

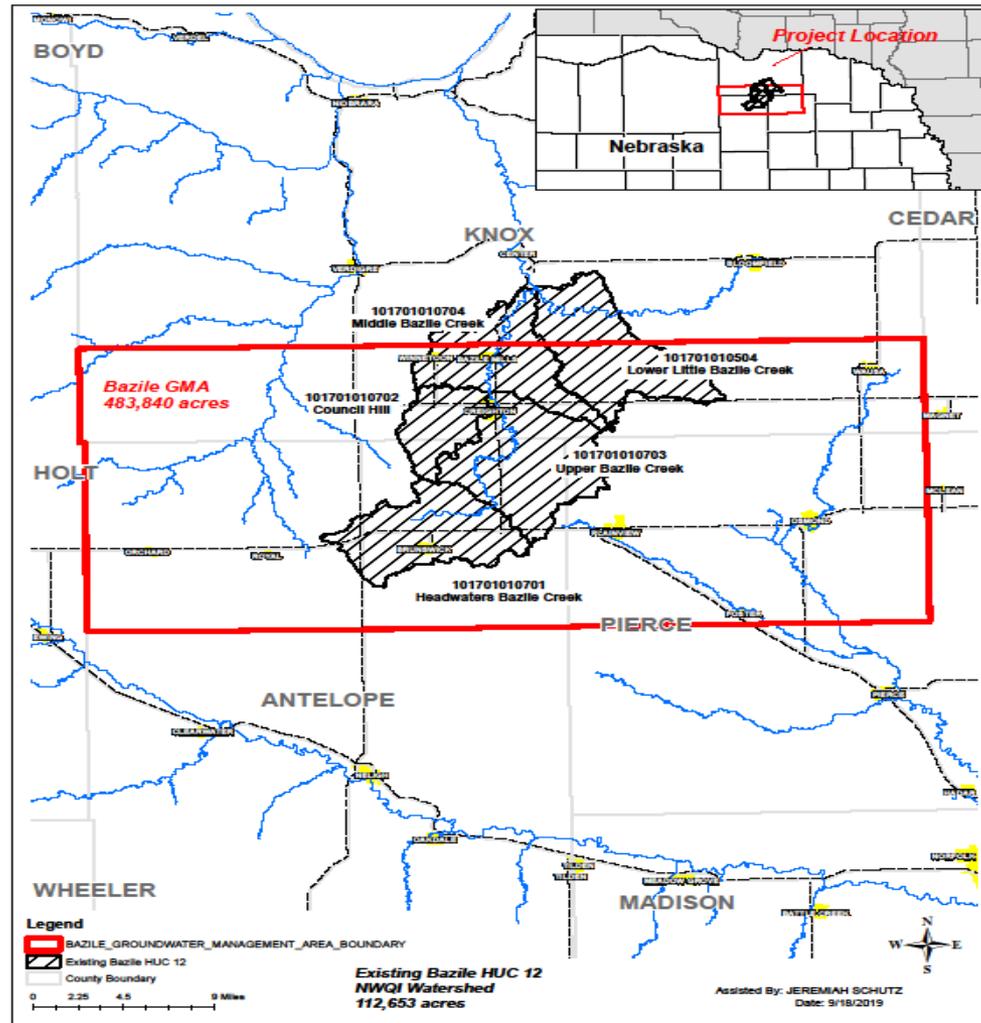
Nebraska NWQI FY 2019 Watersheds



-  **FY2019 NWQI Watersheds (Implementation Phase Priority Areas)**
-  **FY2019 NWQI Watershed Assessments (Planning Phase Priority Areas)**

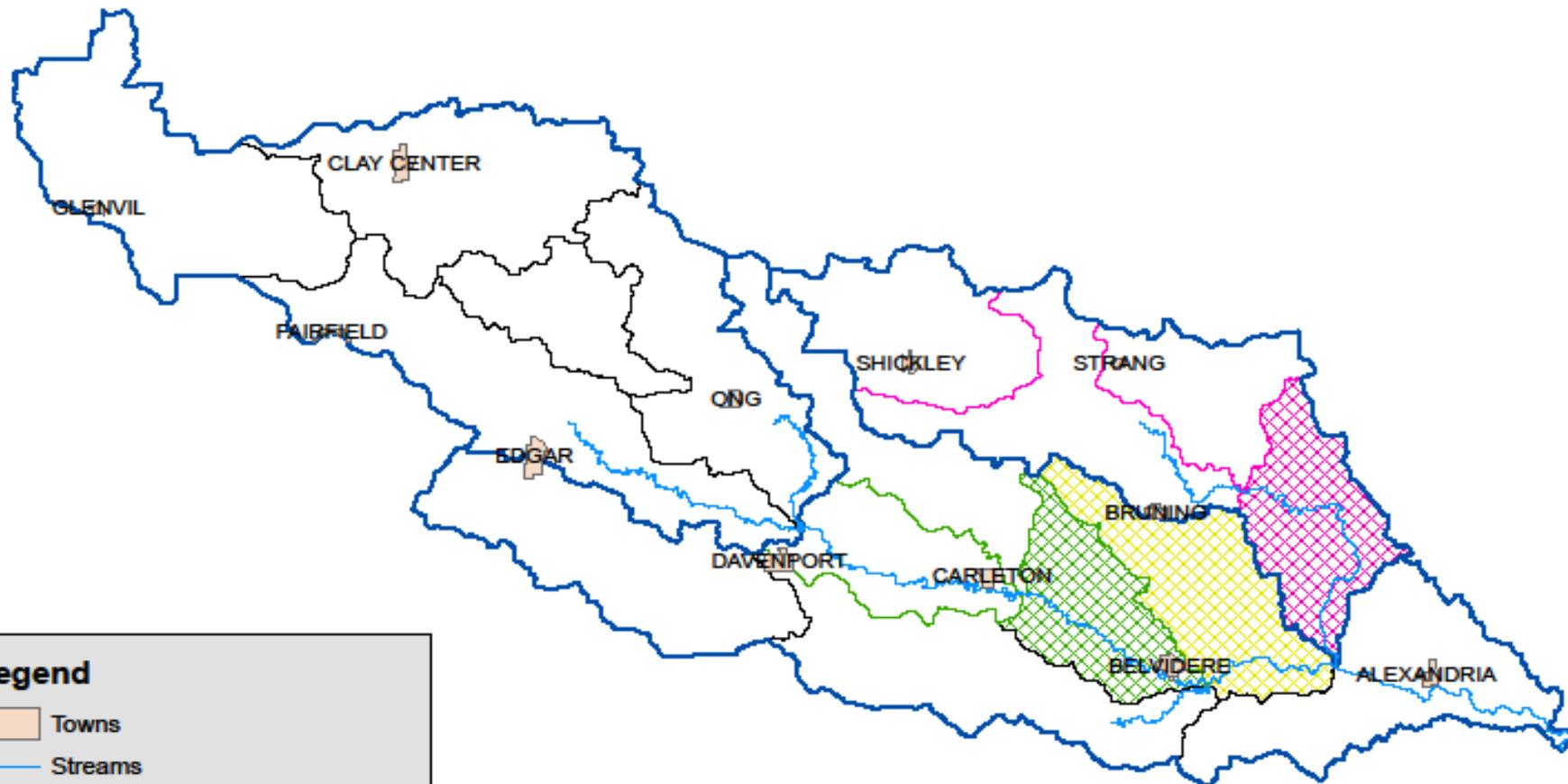
-  **Source Water Protection Areas - FY 2019 (Planning Phase)**

Bazile NWQI



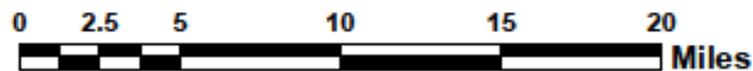


Big Sandy Creek - NWQI Target Watersheds

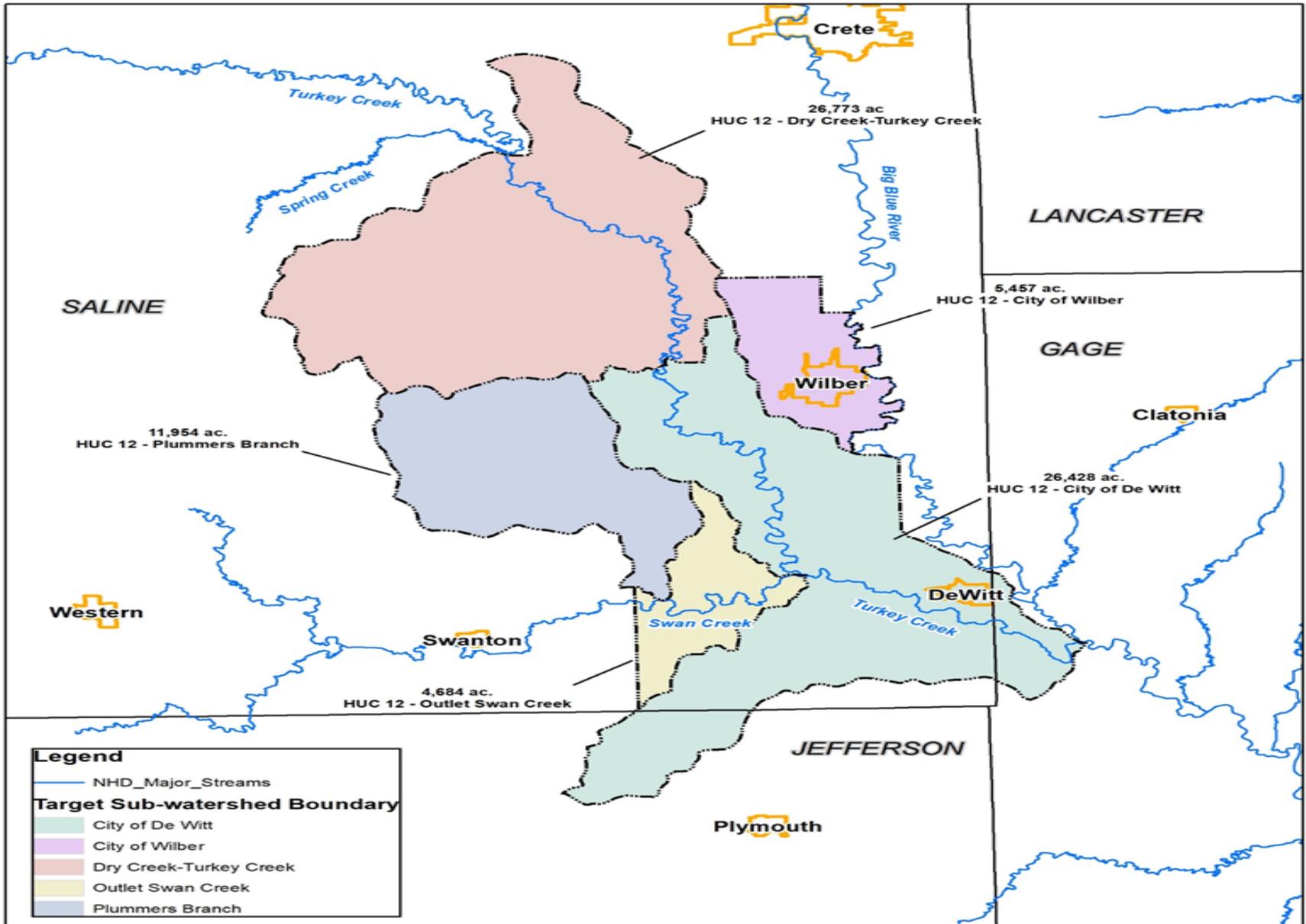


Legend

- Towns
- Streams
- Big Sandy Creek HUC 10s
- HUC 12s
- HUC 12: City of Belvidere
- HUC 12: Big Sandy Creek
- HUC 12: Outlet Dry Sandy Creek



TURKEY CREEK PRIORITY SUB-WATERSHED MAP FINAL NWQI BOUNDARY



Legend

- NHD_Major_Streams
- Target Sub-watershed Boundary**
 - City of De Witt
 - City of Wilber
 - Dry Creek-Turkey Creek
 - Outlet Swan Creek
 - Plummers Branch



Wahoo Creek HUC 12s Selected for the 2016 National Water Quality Initiative in Nebraska

SAUNDERS
COUNTY

Lower Platte North
Natural Resource District

North Fork Wahoo Creek
102002030702

WAHOO

Wahoo Creek
Category 5
Impaired at this point

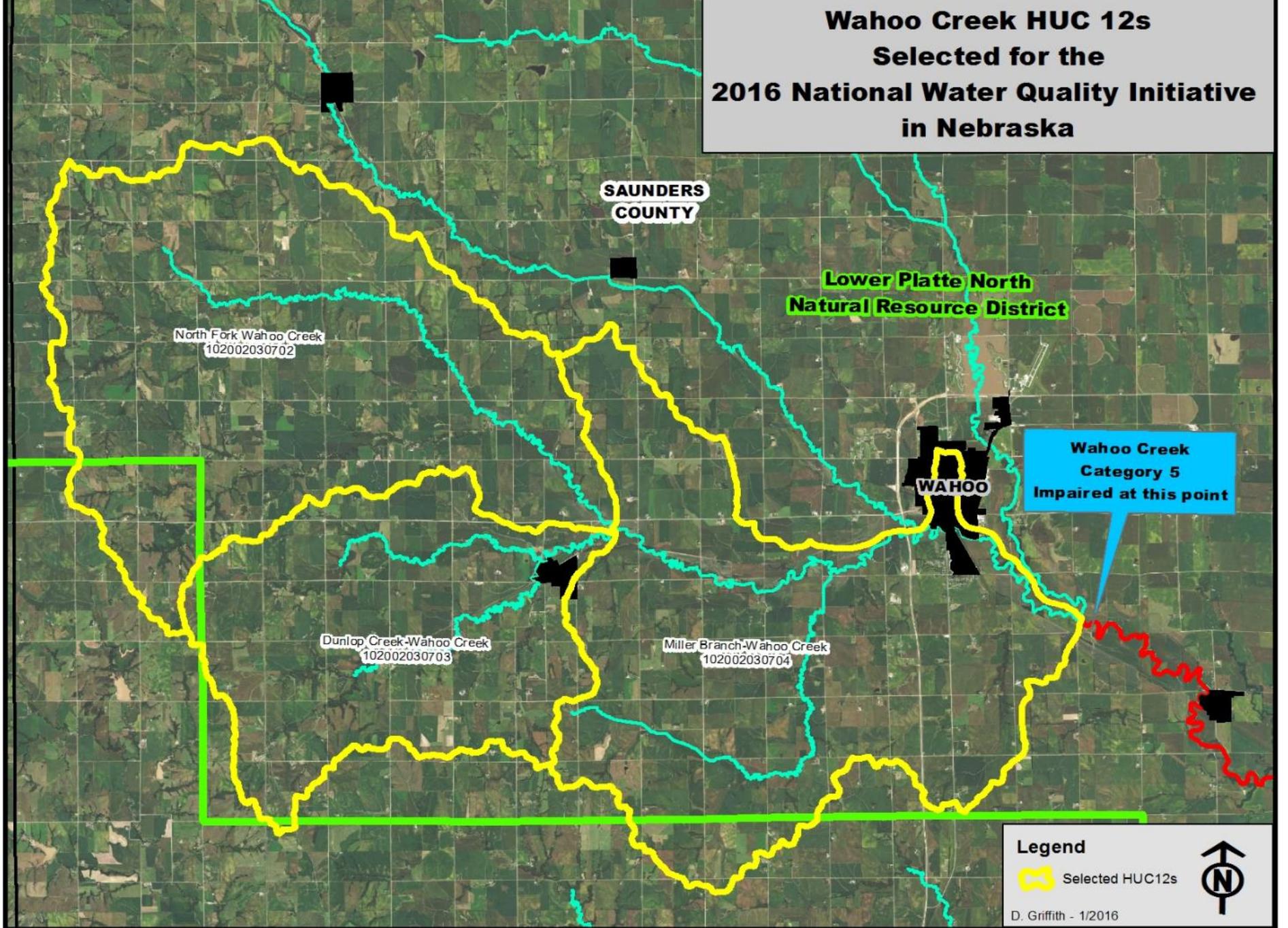
Dunlop Creek-Wahoo Creek
102002030703

Miller Branch-Wahoo Creek
102002030704

Legend
Selected HUC12s



D. Griffith - 1/2016



- **FY2020 NWQI Allocation = \$1.3 Million**
 - Big Sandy FA = \$206,059
 - Wahoo Creek (Implementation) FA = \$289,970
 - Wahoo Creek (Readiness/Planning) TA = \$50,000
 - Bazile Creek FA = \$401,717
 - Turkey Creek FA = \$390,951

- **FY2020 Application Cutoff Dates**
 - Big Sandy = May 22, 2020
 - Wahoo Creek = April 17, 2020
 - Bazile = March 13, 2020
 - Turkey Creek = March 13, 2020



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Agricultural Conservation Easement Programs

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FY2020 ACEP - Nebraska

- Application cutoff date – April 3, 2020
- ACEP-WRE Applications = 36
 - 5,900 acres, \$16 million estimated cost
- ACEP-WRE approved = 6
 - 1,106 acres, \$3.6 million
- ACEP-ALE-GSS approved= 1,
 - 8,900 acres, \$2.9 million federal share
- ACEP-WREP Approved = 7
 - 650 acres, \$2.8 million

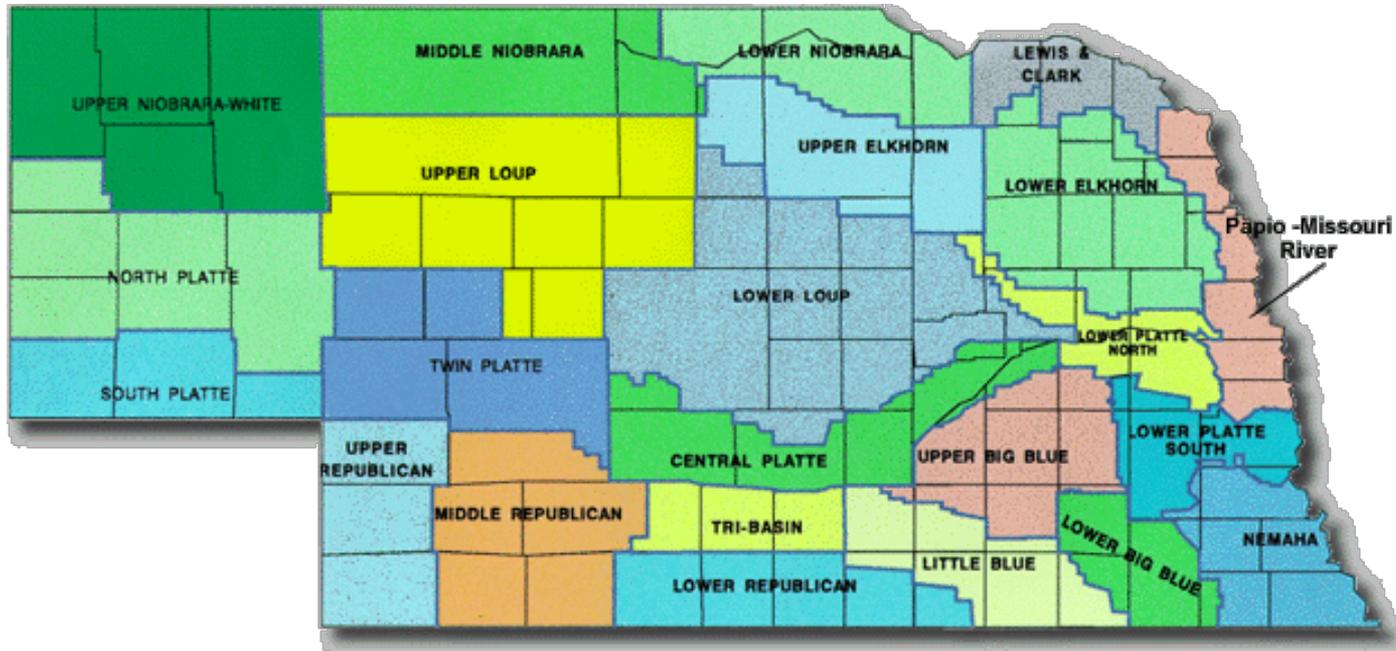
2019 Spring Flood



EWP – Floodplain Easement Program

- Sign up ended October 31, 2019.
- 28 applications on approximately 6300 acres.
- Cost estimates exceed \$20 million for purchase and restoration
- Nebraska has received an allocation of \$16.5 million
- 8 applications approved on 4,657 acres

FY2021 LOCAL WORK GROUP MEETINGS



LOCAL WORK GROUP MEETINGS

- Meetings completed in January/February 2020
- *LOCAL WORK GROUP AGENDA ITEMS:*
 - Priority Resource Concerns
 - Fund Pools - Ranking Tools – Screening Tools
 - Revised ranking process for FY2020 – CART
 - Practice Payment Schedule
 - Local issues

FY2021 Local Workgroup Recommendations

• Practice scenario requests

- Irrigation Water Management (449)
 - Add IWM scenario - Modeling
- Sprinkler System (442)
 - Leave VRI speed control on docket for NRD to use
 - Would like to C/S on the required filters needed to irrigate when the water source is from canals

FY2021 Local Workgroup Recommendations

• Practice scenario requests

• Planned Grazing System (528)

- LWG asked if scenarios pay for partial year rest or full year deferment
- Add partial deferment scenario instead of just the full year deferment in Scenario 8
- Edit or add scenario for livestock deferment under Prescribed Grazing allowing early spring grazing until May 20 or 30th. Livestock then deferred rest of the year.

FY2021 Local Workgroup Recommendations

• Practice scenario requests

• Planned Grazing System (528)

- Add new or edit Scenario 5, Grazing lands 30-73% rest - \$15
- Add new or edit Scenario 6, Grazing lands >73% rest - \$30
 - LWG comment: Payments are significantly lower than pasture rental rates in eastern NE where stocking rates are higher
- Add new or edit Scenario 8, Livestock Deferment (F1) - \$60
 - LWG comment: Full year deferment needs to be comparable to actual rental rates to be competitive

FY2021 Local Workgroup Recommendations

• Practice scenario requests

- Planned Grazing System (528)
 - Add another Livestock Deferment scenario allowing early spring grazing until May 20 or 30. Then defer livestock for remainder of the year.
 - Edit 528 rules: Allow prescribed grazing to be cost shared more than once.
 - LWG comment: Currently limiting producers to only one grazing land improvement contract.

FY2021 Local Workgroup Recommendations

• Practice scenario requests

• Cover Crop (340)

- Modify existing scenario to allow the ability to hay or graze cover crops when converting cropland to grassland
- Scenario #44 Frost terminated Cover Crop should be allowed to be used in more situations

• Residue Management (329)

- Should no longer be an incentive payment or reduced to 1 year

FY2021 Local Workgroup Recommendations

• Practice scenario requests

• Underground Outlet (620)

- Scenario names are confusing. Recommend change to reflect type and size of pipe rather than number of risers in system.
- Need additional underground outlet scenarios (no specific suggestions)
- Noted that most scenarios were for PVC pipe, other types such as CMP, dual wall, etc., are not well represented

FY2021 Local Workgroup Recommendations

• Practice scenario requests

- Grassed Waterway (412), Terrace (600), WS Basins (638)
 - Waterways, terrace and basins should be paid by acre, should be increased 20-25%
- Water Well (642)
 - Add scenario to convert power supply on existing stock wells to solar. Currently policy only allows solar system on new wells.

FY2021 Local Workgroup Recommendations

• Practice scenario requests

- Conservation Crop Rotation (328)
 - Require cover crop if cash crop removed by Oct. 15, fund the seeding costs
- Nutrient Management (590)
 - LWG does not agree with allowing producers to exceed UNL recommendations and still be in compliance (>15%)

FY2021 Local Workgroup Recommendations

• Practice scenario requests

- Add new practice: Land Smoothing (466)
 - Practice needed to remove surface irregularities (old or broken terrace systems) which interfere with new systems
 - Adapt existing Kansas payment scenario #2.
 - Field Shaping Scenario Description: Removing irregularities on the land surface of cropland by use of heavy equipment.

FY2021 Local Workgroup Recommendations

- **Practice scenario requests**

- Add new practice: (---)

- Practice needed for ditching (drainage) of inundated fields, new resource concerns due to excess precipitation (shelterbelts drowning out)

FY2021 Local Workgroup Recommendations

• Change practice payment caps

- Reduce (590) Nutrient Management – From \$10,000 to \$7,500
- Increase (313) Waste Storage Facility – From \$80,000 to \$150,000
- Increase (340) Cover Crop – from \$7,500 to \$10,000
- Increase (327) Conservation Cover – currently \$7,500

• Retain existing payment caps

- (329) No Till - \$5,000
- (528) Prescribed Grazing, Adaptive Mgmt. - \$15,000
- (645) Upland Wildlife Habitat Mgmt. - \$7,500
- (595) Integrated Pest Mgmt. - \$10,000

FY2021 Local Workgroup Recommendations

- **Additional Fund Pools Requested**

- Forestry
- Long Pine Watershed
- Infrastructure Repair
- Cover Crops
- Grassed Waterway
- Farm Technology
- Water Quality

- **EQIP application cutoff dates**

- TBD (Multiple Recommendations)

- **Applications ranked/Preapproved cutoff dates**

- TBD (Multiple Recommendations)

FY2021 Local Workgroup Recommendations

- **Practice Payment Schedule – Payment Rate Calculation**
 - NRD wants receipts collected to compare local costs with regional costs
 - Localize scenario cost determinations (4 state region too large)
 - LWG Comment: Supplemental funding from NRD can be inaccurate if rates reflect region as opposed specifically to Nebraska
 - Recommend locally based payment rate using bills submitted from producers.
 - LWG Comment: Actual bills are needed in order to determine if payment rate is too high or too low.



QUESTIONS?