

# State Technical Committee Meeting – 06/04/2020

ALL POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS ARE ON THE [WEBSITE](#).

You can listen to the recording of the meeting with the link below, by copying & pasting into your internet browser:

<https://web.microsoftstream.com/video/27e51779-b377-45d0-8808-157ceb2a4727>

**Attendees:** Craig Derickson, Brad Soncksen, Tami Nordman, Andy Bishop, Eric Zach, Lavaine Moore, Ritch Nelson, Adam Smith, Al Juhnke, Andrea Hartman, Andrew Pierson, Annette Sudbeck, Ashley Kohls, Melissa Baier, Bill Bevans, Barney Whatley, Boone McAfee, Brody Vorderstrasse, Bard Lubben, Doug Christensen, Crystal Powers, Curt Becker, David Eigenberg, Dennis Schueth, David Potter, Kenny Dinan, Neil Dominy, Eric Gnuse, Allen Gehring, Georja, Greg Whitmore, James Huntwork, Kevin Hutsell, Doug Garrison, George Cunningham, Kimberly Hill, Aaron Hird, Jana Ingwerson-Laws, Jason Moudry, John Hansen, Doug Jones, Judy Trent, Kelsi Wehrman, Kellee Rasmussen, Kent Zimmerman, Kevin, Doug Klein, Kyle Hauschild, Marcia Trompke, Mark Brohman, Matt Smith, Middle Niobrara NRD, Misha, Daniel Morrison, Jennifer Prenosil, Rachael Herpel, Mike McDonald, Rich Walters, Rick Rasby, Shelly Kelly, Steve Roth, Nick Streff, Terry Julesgard, Doug Wagner, Britt Weiser, James Wright.

## WELCOME AND THANK YOU FOR BEING HERE! – Craig Derickson, State Conservationist, NRCS

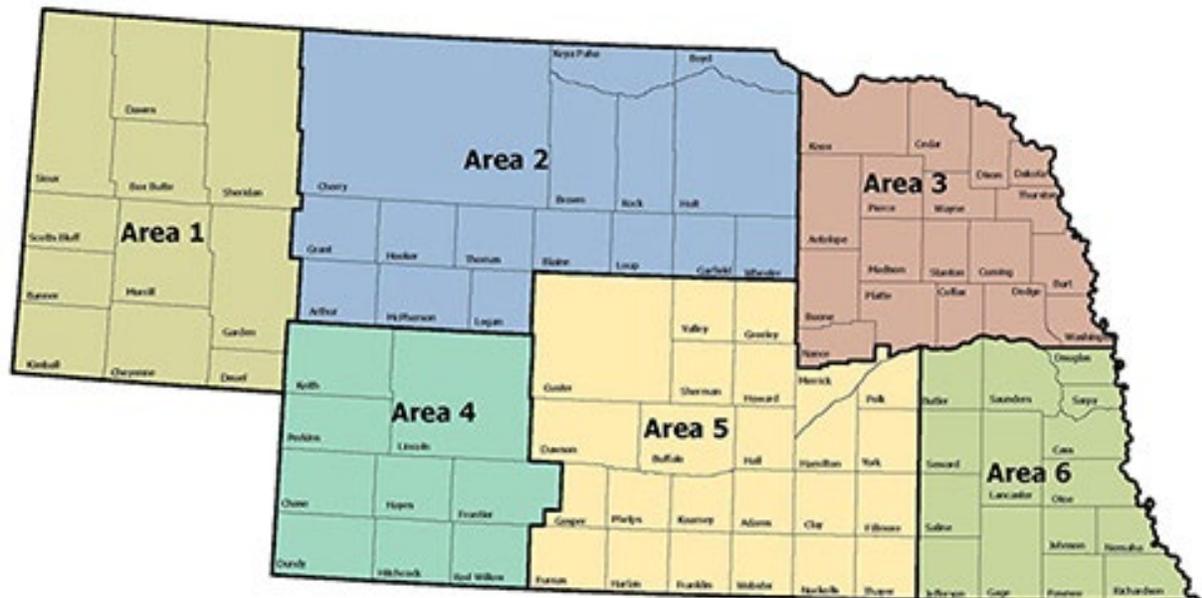
- ❖ Welcome
- ❖ Unusual adjustment & will be a new learning time.
- ❖ This meeting & committee is how we gather information & feedback.
- ❖ Gives Stakeholders opportunity to hear updates on programs & activities.
- ❖ Provide input on the programs & operational activities.
- ❖ Local Work Group Process within our 23 NRDs.
- ❖ State Technical meetings are held quarterly.
- ❖ Will possibly have to do these meetings virtually for a while.

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## **CONSERVATION PROGRAMS - Brad Soncksen, Asst. State Conservationist-Programs, NRCS**

- ❖ CSP
  - 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 obligations = \$10,425.00
- Results of 2020-1 renewal signup
  - Applications = 258
  - Contracts = 96
  - Contract acres = 180,000
- CSP Classic signup
  - Application deadline was May 29, 2020
  - Applications = 910
  - Workload Prioritization Tool will allow efficient processing of applications
  - Assessment and ranking by July 10, 2020
- Priority Resource Concern categories
  - Air Quality Emissions
  - Degraded Plant Condition
  - Fire Management
  - Pest Pressure
  - Inefficient Energy Use
  - Field Pesticide Loss
  - Aquatic Habitat
  - Source Water Depletion
  - Salt Losses to Water
  - Weather Resilience
  - Soil Quality Limitation
  - Terrestrial Habitat
  - Concentrated Erosion
  - Wind and Water Erosion
  - Livestock Production Limitation
  - Storage and Handling of Pollutants
  - Field, Sediment, Nutrient and Pathogen Loss



- Ranking Pool Priority
    - Pool 1, Pool 4 & Pool 5
      - Livestock Production Limitation
      - Field Sediment, Nutrient, & Pathogen Loss
      - Source Water Depletion
      - Terrestrial Habitat
      - Wind & Water Erosion
    - Pool 2, Pool 3 & Pool 6
      - Livestock Production Limitation
      - Field Sediment, Nutrient, & Pathogen Loss
      - Soil Quality Limitation
      - Terrestrial Habitat
      - Wind & Water Erosion
    - Organic
      - Degraded Plant Condition
      - Pest Pressure
      - Field Pesticide loss
      - Soil Quality Limitation
      - Terrestrial Habitat
    - NIPF
      - Degraded Plant Condition
      - Fire Management
      - Pest Pressure
      - Concentrated Erosion
      - Terrestrial Habitat
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## ❖ EQIP

- 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
  
- 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.**
  - Maximum of 10 practices allowed.
    - Can have increased payment rates.
      - 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

- **ANIMAL MORTALITY MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE**
    - Provides assistance to livestock producers for animal mortality disposal resulting from impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.
    - 4 options for disposal
      - Bury
      - Incinerate
      - Rendering plant
      - Composting
    - Application cutoff dates:
      - May 11, 2020 – 20 Applications
      - June 1, 2020 – 5 Applications
      - June 22, 2020 - ?
      - Additional dates TBD
  
  - **SOURCE WATER PROTECTION**
    - **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
      - 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
  
    - **Will revisit this in July to make sure these are the same Priorities in FY2021**
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## ❖ NRCS Partnership Initiatives & Grants

- **Core Principles:**
  - **Innovation**
  - **Partner Contributions**
  - **Impact**
  - **Partnerships & Management**
  
- **RCPP**
  - **Existing Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) projects in Nebraska**
    - **Ogallala Aquifer & Platte River Recovery – CPNRD & TPNRD**
      - \$ 1.7 million
      - Current balance = \$23,000
      - 1 year extension approved
      - Expires 05/13/2021
      - Renewal Application TBD
  
    - **Regional Grassland Bird & Grazing Enhancement Initiative – NGPC.**
      - Missouri, Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa
      - \$ 885,000 (Nebraska allocation)
      - Current Fund Balance = \$169,000
      - Application cutoff March 13th
      - Expires 09/30/2020
  
    - **Cropland Cover for Soil Health and Wildlife – 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
  
    - **Republican Basin Conservation Partnership – LRNRD**
      - \$2.1 million allocated
      - Current balance = \$3,000
      - Additional FA approved = \$500,000
      - Ranking is almost completed.
      - Expires: 08/08/2020
  
    - **Divots in the Pivots – UBBNRD/RWBJV**
      - Combination of ACEP-ALE, ACEP-WRE and EQIP
      - \$1.8 million
      - Expires 09/30/2022
  
    - **Wahoo Creek Water Quality Sites 26 & 27 – LPNNRD**
      - \$1.5 million
      - Active Status
  
    - **Papillion Creek Site WP-1 Dam – PMRNRD**
      - **\$4.4 million**

- Active Status
- **NEW AWARD for FY2019**
  - Resilient Futures for Nebraska Soils – TNC, UBBNRD & CPNRD
    - TNC – Lead Partner
    - \$4.4 million
      - 3.1 million FA
    - Negotiating – June
      - Expect 5yr project
- **FY2019 Awarded 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
- **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 CO<sub>2</sub>e 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.
- **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
  - 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
    - **Submitted NE Proposal RCPP-AFA – (15 Projects will be funded Nationwide)**

## ❖ **CONSERVATION INNOVATION GRANTS (CIG)**

- 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

- 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.
    - **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 (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**

- Wahoo Creek – Saunders - Lower Platte North NRD
- Bazile Creek – Antelope, Pierce, Knox - LENRD, LCNRD, UENRD
- Big Sandy Creek – Little Blue NRD
- Turkey Creek – Lower Big Blue NRD
  
- FY2020 NWQI Allocation = \$1.3 Million
  - Big Sandy FA = \$206,059.00
  - Wahoo Creek (Implementation) FA = \$289,970.00
  - Wahoo Creek (Readiness/Planning) TA = \$50,000.00
  - Bazile Creek FA = \$401,717.00
  - Turkey Creek FA = \$390,951.00
  
- FY2020 Application Cutoff Dates
  - Big Sandy = May 22, 2020
  - Wahoo Creek = April 17, 2020
  - Bazile = March 13, 2020
  - Turkey Creek = March 13, 2020

## ❖ ACEP

### ○ **FY2020 ACEP - Nebraska**

- Application cutoff – 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

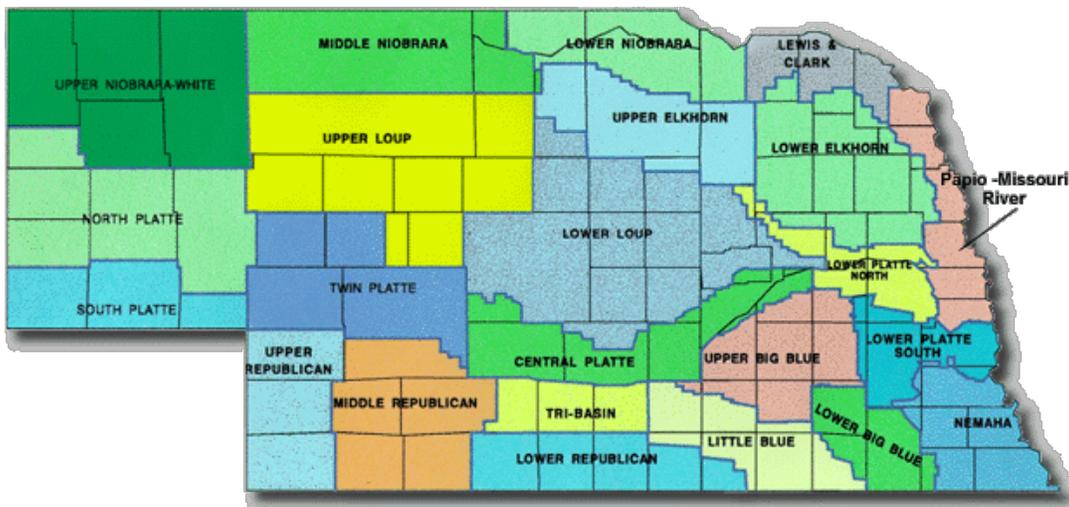
### ○ **2019 SPRING FLOODING**

- 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

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## ❖ FY 2021 LOCAL WORK GROUP MEETINGS –

- Meetings completed in January/February 2020
- **Allocation provided to 23 Local Work Groups**



### ○ ***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
      - **SEE TOPIC PAPER HANDOUT – Kevin Hutsell, State Water Management Engineer**
    - 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.
    - 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.
      - 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.
      - 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.
    - 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
    - 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

- 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.
- 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%)
- 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.
  - Practice needed for ditching (drainage) of inundated fields, new resource concerns due to excess precipitation (shelterbelts drowning out)
- **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
- **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)
  - **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.
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## **CRP GRASSLANDS UPDATE & SAFE modification recommendations for Upland Bird Safe, Greater Prairie Chicken SAFE and Migratory Bird SAFE** - *Lavaine Moore, Program Specialist, FSA; Eric Zach, Ag Program Manager, NE Game & Parks; Andy Bishop, Rainwater Joint Venture Coordinator; Ritch Nelson, State Wildlife Biologist-Forester, NRCS*

*Lavaine Moore, Program Specialist, FSA; Eric Zach, Ag Program Manager, NE Game & Parks; Andy Bishop, Rainwater Joint Venture Coordinator; Ritch Nelson, State Wildlife Biologist-Forester, NRCS*

### **❖ Overview of CRP General & CRP Grasslands Reason for SAFE modifications**

- General SU54
  - CRP General signup 54 period: December 9, 2019 thru February 28, 2020
  - Acres Offered: 148,368
  - Number of Offers: 2,373
  - Accepted Offers: 131,209
  - Number of Offers: 2,046
  - Percent of acres accepted: 88%
  - Effective Date: October 1, 2020
- Grasslands
  - CRP Grasslands signup 202 period – March 16, 2020 thru May 15, 2020
  - Offered acres = 421,783.3 acres
  - Ranking Results have not been determined by National Office, coming soon
  - Effective Date: October 1, 2020
- CRP Continuous/CREP
  - Offers can continue to be accepted until August 21, 2020
  - Effective Date: Month following approval, unless deferred
    - Crop must be out of field on new land being offered
  - NRCS Deadline -Complete Conservation Plan – Sept. 11, 2020
  - FSA Deadline - Approve Contract (CRP-1) – Sept. 30, 2020
- 2018 Farm Bill Safe Options
  - Notice CRP-895 Provided States the option to modify existing SAFE Projects or submit New Proposals

- Existing SAFE Proposals:
  - Upland Bird SAFE
  - Greater Prairie Chickens SAFE
  - Migratory Bird SAFE
- SAFE provides States the opportunity to address high priority wildlife needs through habitat restoration. Practices can be used to restore the following:
  - Threatened and endangered species
  - Habitat for species suffering a population decline
  - Habitat for species to provide social or economic value to the community

## ❖ Review of Upland Bird SAFE and Greater Prairie chicken SAFE modifications

- SAFE PROCESS
  - CRP897 notice requests new SAFE proposals and revisions of existing SAFE projects.
  - State Technical Committee review and recommendations
  - FSA State Committee forwards recommended proposals to FSA CEPD (National)
  - Must be submitted to CEPD by June 19, 2020
  
- EXISTING SAFE
  - Tallgrass Prairie SAFE
    - 42,013 acres enrolled
  - Upland Gamebird SAFE
    - 86,001 acres enrolled
  - No available acres since 2017
  - Began in 2008 and contracts are starting to expire.
  - Continuous Practice with SIP and PIP
  - SU 54 SAFE moved to General CRP – 5,503 acres
  - SAFE partners decided to combine existing SAFEs
  - Why?
    - Overlapping objectives
    - Using the same practices
    - Changes needed to each
    - CRP897 allows only one SAFE for each habitat type
  
- REVISED SAFE PROPOSAL
  - Upland wildlife habitat first priority
    - Enroll acres to maintain/improve upland game bird populations:
    - Greater prairie-chicken
    - Northern bobwhite
    - Plains sharp-tailed grouse
    - Ring-necked pheasant
  
- \* Designed to also provide benefits for grassland songbirds and pollinators (monarchs)
  
- Upland Wildlife and Pollinator SAFE
  - Practices: CP4D Wildlife Habitat, CP25 Rare and Declining Habitat, CP42 Pollinator

- Must meet general CRP SU eligibility
- Wildlife biologists develop tailored conservation plans
  - Multiple plantings/cover types
  - Shrub covers optional
  - Field size, location, surrounding habitat, shrub component, pollinators
- Management activities valuable in achieving structural and vegetative diversity within CRP fields



Eligible Areas by Prairie

- Loess Mixed Grass Prairie
- Lowland Tallgrass Prairie
- Mixed & Shortgrass Prairie
- Upland Tallgrass Prairie
- Ineligible Area

### Proposed Project Area



### ○ SUMMARY

- Goal is to provide the best possible wildlife habitat on SAFE acres
- Provide flexibility for landowners and wildlife biologists to tailor CRP plantings to meet the SAFE program and the landowner's goals.

## ❖ Review of Migratory Bird SAFE modifications

### ○ Migratory Bird, Butterfly and Pollinator SAFE Proposal Overview

- What Is a Playa?
  - Description
    - Formation
    - Soils
    - Function

- Services
  - Wildlife
  - Recreation
  - Groundwater Recharge/Nutrient Cycling
  - Forage Production
- Background
  - 2014 – Multi-State SAFE proposed by:
    - Playa Lakes Joint Venture
    - Rainwater Basin Joint Venture
  - January 2017 - Authorized FSA National Office
  - Notice CRP-818
    - Kansas – 10,000 acres
    - Nebraska – 10,000 acres
  - February 17, 2017 – Notice CRP-825, Migratory Bird SAFE Project Approval

- Eligible in parts of the following 42 counties:

Adams	Banner	Blaine	Buffalo
Butler	Chase	Cheyenne	Clay
Custer	Dawson	Deuel	Dundy
Fillmore	Franklin	Frontier	Furnas
Garden	Gosper	Hall	Hamilton
Harlan	Hayes	Hitchcock	Jefferson
Kearney	Keith	Kimball	Lancaster
Lincoln	Logan	Loup	Morrill
Nuckolls	Perkins	Phelps	Polk
Saline	Seward	Thayer	Valley
Webster	York		

- **Program Details – Consistent with Original Proposal**
  - Signup Process
    - Sign-up anytime
    - Continuous - CCRP
    - Batch Process
  - Playa hydrology must be restored to the full extent possible as determined by NRCS
  - Remove sedimentation
  - Fill concentrated pits
  - Remove fill within hydric soil footprint
  - Cost-share available
  - Eligible Land:
    - Cropland meeting 2-CRP par. 151 – Land must be planted 4 out of 6 years
    - Located “ENTIRELY” in project area
    - Located outside 100-year floodplain
    - Is a playa lake
  - Marginal pastureland is not eligible
  - Contract Duration & Effective Date:
    - 10 to 15-year contracts

- Eligible size:
  - Maximum enrollment per offer (tract) is 160 acres
  - Minimum offer is 2 acres for entire offer
  - No wetland determination required or needed
- Amount of adjacent upland acreage (buffer) to be enrolled shall be determined by the landowner and NRCS
- Amount of adjacent upland acres:
  - Limited to acres required to provide a protective buffer to the cropped wetland
  - Minimum average buffer is 120 feet
  - May be less than 4 to 1 ratio
  - Shall not exceed 4 to 1 ratio
- **Program Details - New**
  - Reverse Auction: (New Concept)
    - Annual rental amount determined by landowner
    - Top rental rate NASS irrigated rental rate by Playa Cluster
    - Lower rental rate dryland rental rate by Playa Cluster
    - Competitive ranking based on offer bid amounts
    - Reverse Auction: (Continued)
    - Batching
    - Batch by Playa Cluster
    - 2 batching periods annually
    - Only accept 50% of offers or 50% of the acres
- **Program Details - NEW**
  - Rainwater Basin
  - Central Table Playas
  - Southwest Playas
  - Incentives:
    - Practice Incentive Payments (PIP) authorized on new land (5%)
    - Signing Incentive Payment (SIP) at 32.5%
    - Partners work to leverage Landowner 42.5% restoration costs
    - Landowner provides 20% of restoration costs
- **SAFE Overview**
  - Background
  - Proposed Changes
    - Reverse Auction
      - Auction anchor points
      - Batching cycles
      - Selection criteria

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❖ **Ritch Nelson**

- As we take these 2 safe proposals forward if you have any suggestions, input or recommendations, please provide them back to Tami or Ritch.

- Next step is to take this to the FSA State Committee meeting, which will hopefully be scheduled within the next 10 days.
- Appreciate our partners coming forward to push these 2 proposals & making all the edits/changes.
- Trying to balance resource concerns from a wildlife standpoint, but still trying to provide something that a producer has some incentives to participate in. Can have the best SAFE proposal for wildlife but have no benefit for the Producer it won't get put to good use.

[6/4 2:53 PM] Craig Romary

Just a related comment, FYI. There is still funding available through the Nebraska Buffer Strip Program for new or renewing contracts for filter strips (393) and riparian forest buffer strips (391) next to streams, rivers and wetlands. Producers can partner with CCRP and/or CREP for additional incentives, potentially, or use it on its own... More specifics can be found at <http://bit.ly/NDAbuffer>, as well as at NRCS and NRD offices.

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## **QUESTIONS & Comment**

❖ NONE

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**Please send any further questions or comments to Tami Nordman @ [tami.nordman@usda.gov](mailto:tami.nordman@usda.gov)**

## ***FUTURE 2020 MEETINGS:***

**June 4, 2020 @ UNL Extension Office, 444 Cherrycreek Rd, Lincoln**

**September 10, 2020 @ NE Game & Parks Outdoor Education Center, 4703 N. 44<sup>th</sup> St, Lincoln**

**December 3, 2020 @ NE Game & Parks Outdoor Education Center, 4703 N. 44<sup>th</sup> St, Lincoln**