



United States Department of Agriculture

○ Conservation Programs

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



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www.ne.nrcs.usda.gov

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Conservation Stewardship Program



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Conservation Stewardship Program - Nebraska

- Results of 2020 CSP Classic Signup
 - Applications = 910
 - Contracts = 128
 - Contract Acres = 319,000
 - Obligated funds = \$12.4 Million

Conservation Stewardship Program - Nebraska

- Results of 2020 GCI signups
 - New contracts = 199
 - Contract acres = 10,425
 - Obligated funds = \$938,000
- Results of 2020-1 Renewal signup
 - Applications = 258
 - Contracts = 95
 - Contract acres = 177,000
 - Obligated funds = \$7.8 Million

Conservation Stewardship Program - Nebraska

- 2020 CSP Annual Payments
 - All FY 2020 approved contracts - **November 6, 2020**
 - CSP-Renewal, CSP-Classic, and CSP-GCI
 - Active contracts approved in FY 2015 – FY2019 where participant elects to receive payment in CY 2020 - **November 6, 2020**
 - Active contracts approved in FY 2015 – FY2019 where participant elects to receive payment in CY 2021 - **February 5, 2021**

Conservation Stewardship Program - Nebraska

- Total Active CSP Contracts – December 2020
 - Contracts = 2,703
 - Contract Acres = 5,075,994
 - Obligated funds = \$200,832,906

Conservation Stewardship Program - Nebraska

- FY2021 Allocations
 - CSP Classic = \$7.85 Million
 - CSP Renewal = \$7.8 Million
 - CSP-Grassland Conservation Initiative = \$255,000
- FY2021 Applications and **funding projection**
 - Classic = 1116 **7%**
 - Renewal = 289 **27%**
 - GCI = 70 **100%**



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Agricultural Conservation Easement Programs

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FY2020 ACEP - Nebraska

- **Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE)**
 - New agreements: 9
 - New acres: 1,156
 - Obligated: \$4,061,295
 - Closed ACEP-WRE Easements: 11
 - Acres: 1057
 - Easement Acquisition Dollars: \$3,101,158

FY2020 ACEP - Nebraska

- **Agricultural Land Easements (ALE)**
 - New agreements: 1
 - New acres: 8914
 - Obligated: \$2,950,000
 - Closed ACEP-ALE Easements: 2
 - Acres: 4039
 - Federal Easement Acquisition Dollars: \$675,010

FY2020 ACEP - Nebraska

- **Wetland Reserve Easements (RCPP-WRE)**
 - New Agreements: 1
 - New Acres: 47
 - Obligation: \$133,205.00
- **Agricultural Land Easements (RCPP-ALE)**
 - Closed RCPP-ALE Easements: 5
 - Acres: 655
 - Federal Share of Easement Acquisition; \$668,495

FY2020 ACEP - Nebraska

- **Emergency Watershed Protection Program – Floodplain Easements (EWPP-FPE)**
 - Eligible Applications: 21
 - Acres: 5590
 - Estimated Requested funding: \$20,313,085
 - Applications approved for possible agreements: 7
 - Estimated Acres: 4501
 - Estimated Funding needed: \$16,526,641

FY2021 ACEP - Nebraska

- Application cutoff date – October 1, 2020
 - WRE Applications = 37, Acres = 5,347
 - ALE Applications = 0
- Appraisals will determine Fair Market Value
- Compensation rate for 30-year easements is 75% of permanent easement value



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Environmental Quality Incentives Program



Environmental Quality Incentives Program - Nebraska

- Total Active EQIP Contracts – December 2020
 - Contracts = 2,400
 - Contract Acres = 912,000
 - Obligated funds = \$75.5 million



EQIP Allocation FY2021

2021 Mandatory Distribution

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

FY2021 STATEWIDE FUND POOLS

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

FY2021 PARTNERSHIP FUND POOLS

- National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI)
 - 3 Projects = \$1.8 million
- Water Smart (Bureau of Reclamation)
 - 2 Projects – URNRD = \$250,000
MRNRD = \$500,000
- Forest Service (Joint Chiefs)
 - 1 Project – UNWNRD, MNNRD, ULNRD = \$400,000

- **FY2021 General EQIP Allocation = \$21.1 Million**
 - Wildlife (10%) = \$2.4 Million
 - Historically Underserved (10%) = \$2.4 Million
 - Source Water Protection (10%) = \$2.4 Million
 - Animal Feeding Operations = \$1.0 Million
 - Disaster = \$1.0 Million
 - HEL Treatment = \$300,000
 - Conservation Activity Plans = \$200,000
 - Working Lands for Wildlife = \$100,000
 - High Tunnels = \$100,000
 - Organic = \$100,000
 - Tribal = \$100,000
 - Energy = \$25,000



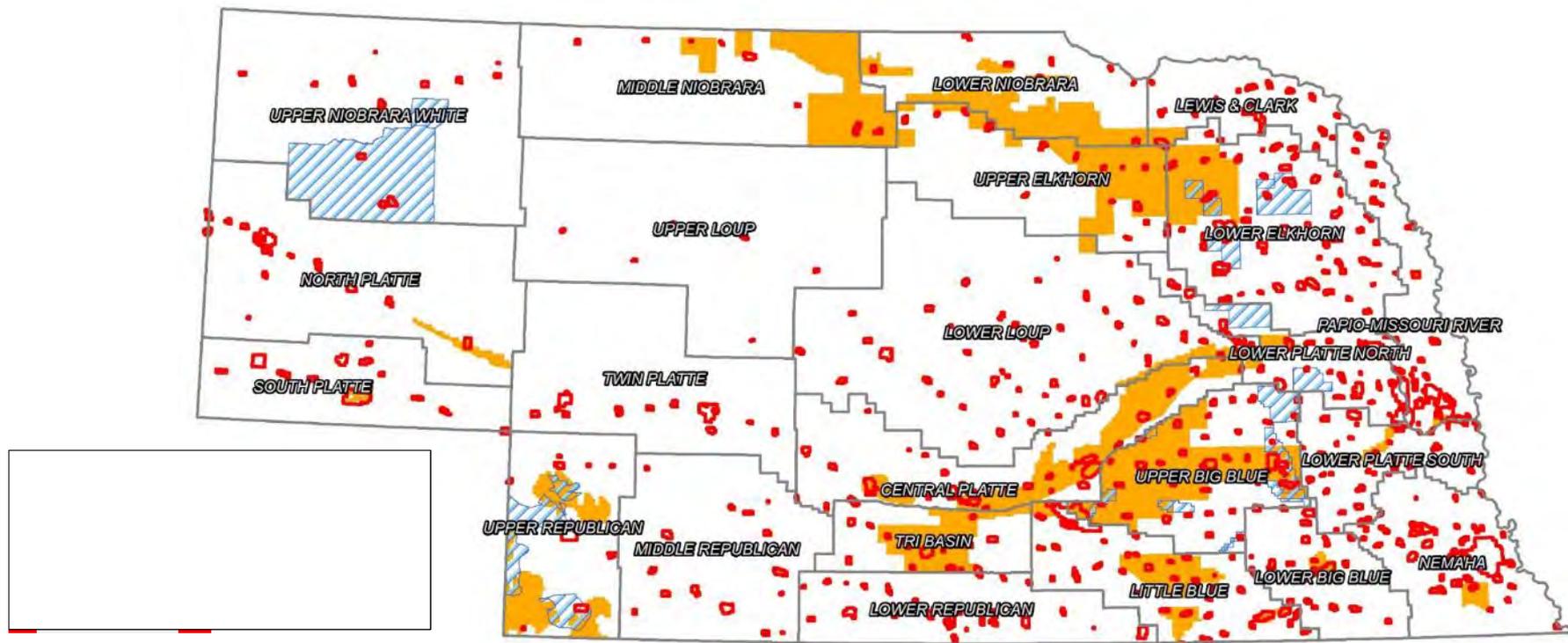
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Source Water Protection

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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
- 420 – Wildlife Habitat Planting
- 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



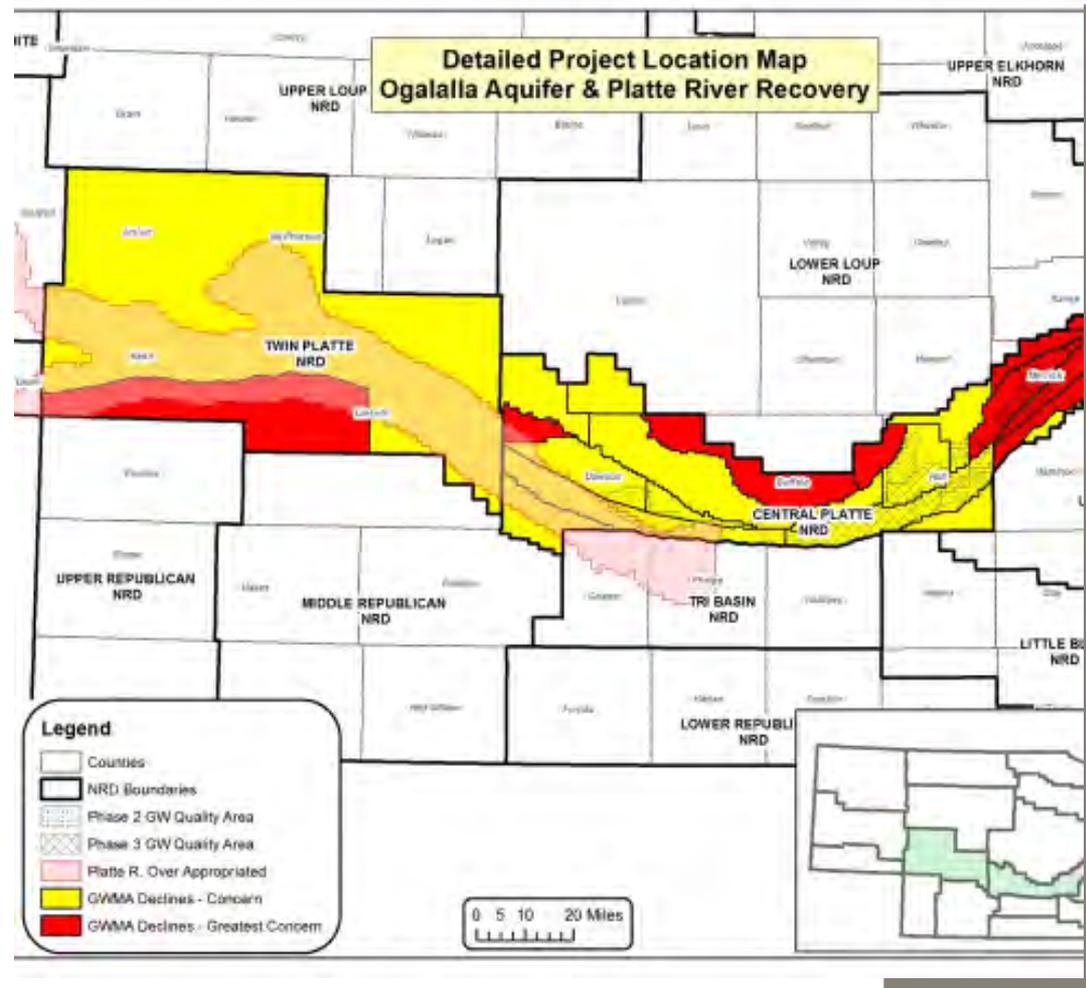
Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

- **Existing Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) projects in Nebraska**
 - **Ogallala Aquifer & Platte River Recovery – CPNRD & TPNRD**
 - **Regional Grassland Bird & Grazing Enhancement Initiative – NGPC. (project ended 9/30/2020)**
 - **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 FY2020 (FY2019 APF)**
 - **Resilient Futures for Nebraska Soils – TNC, UBBNRD & CPNRD**
 - **PPA (Programmatic Partnership Agreement) executed soon**

RCPP - Nebraska

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

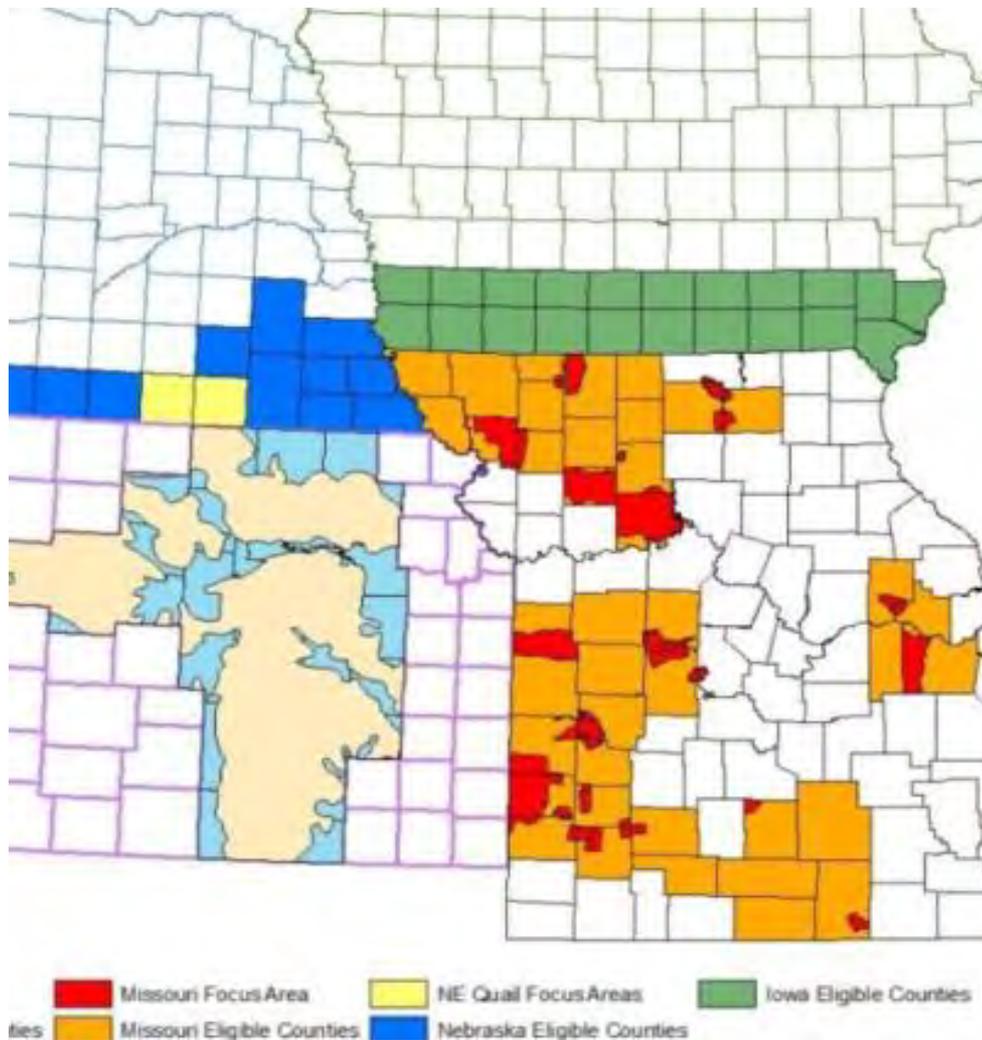
- CPNRD, TPNRD
- \$ 1.7 million
- 1 year extension approved
- Expires 05/13/2021
- Renewal Award Approved
- Agreement negotiated and signed prior to May 2021
- Potential 5 year agreement for \$2.7 million



RCPP - Nebraska

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

- Missouri, Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa
- \$ 885,000 (Nebraska allocation)
- Expires 09/30/2020

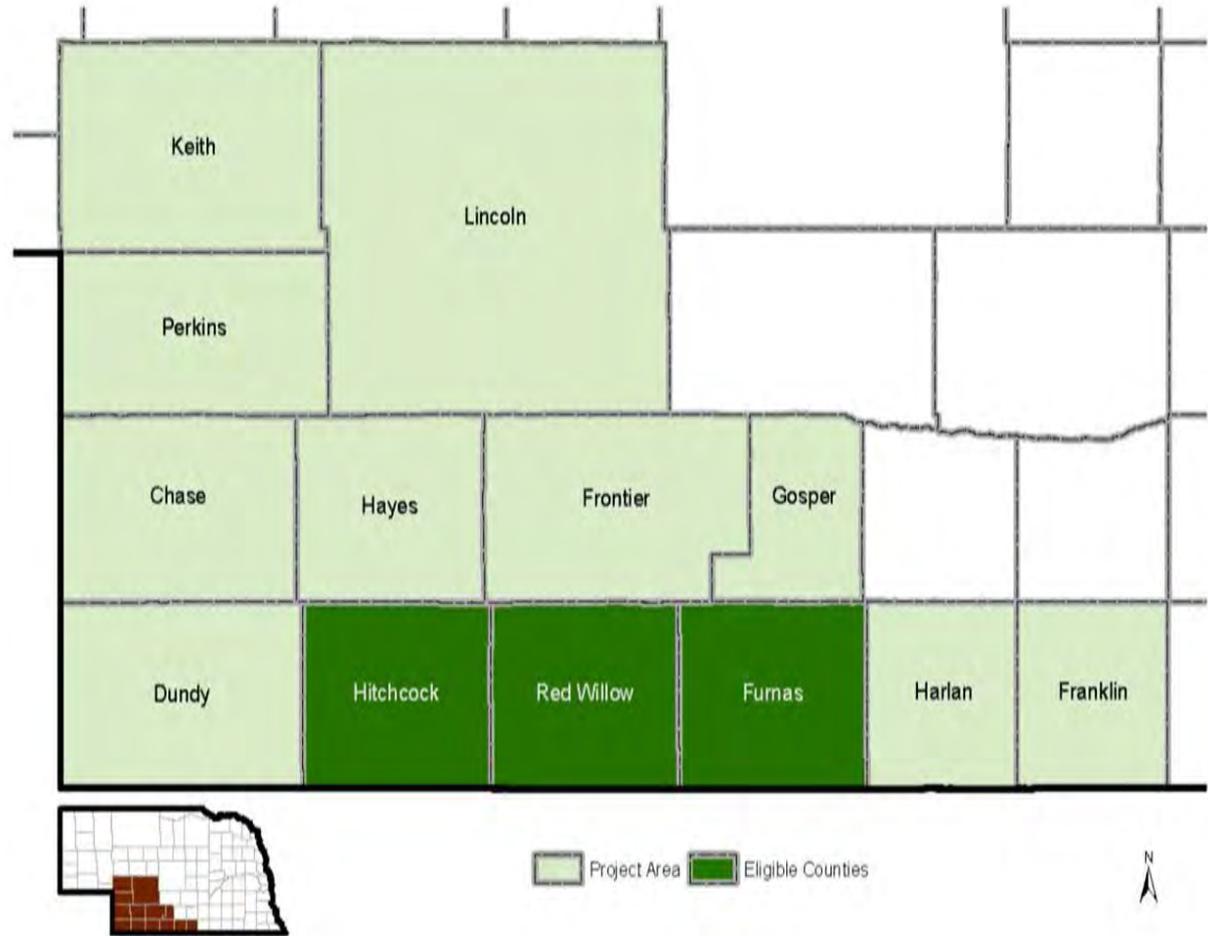


RCPP - Nebraska

Cropland Cover for Soil Health and Wildlife - 2016

– NGPC

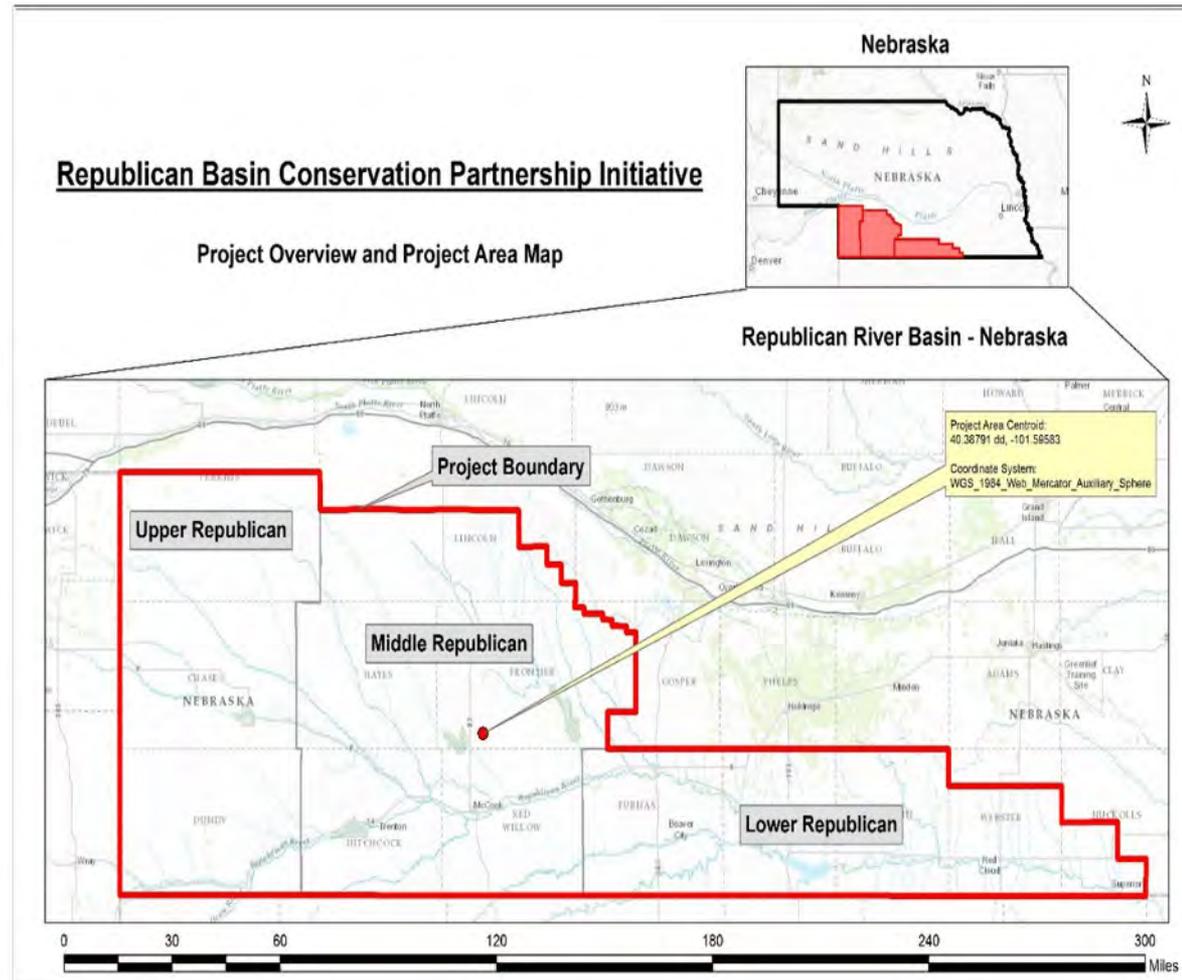
- Initial Allocation = \$700,000
- Expires: 12/31/2020
- Approved for FY20 Renewal
(Expected Approved funds = \$700,000)
- Agreement being developed
(potential 5 years into 2025)
- Next signup in FY2021



RCPP - Nebraska

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

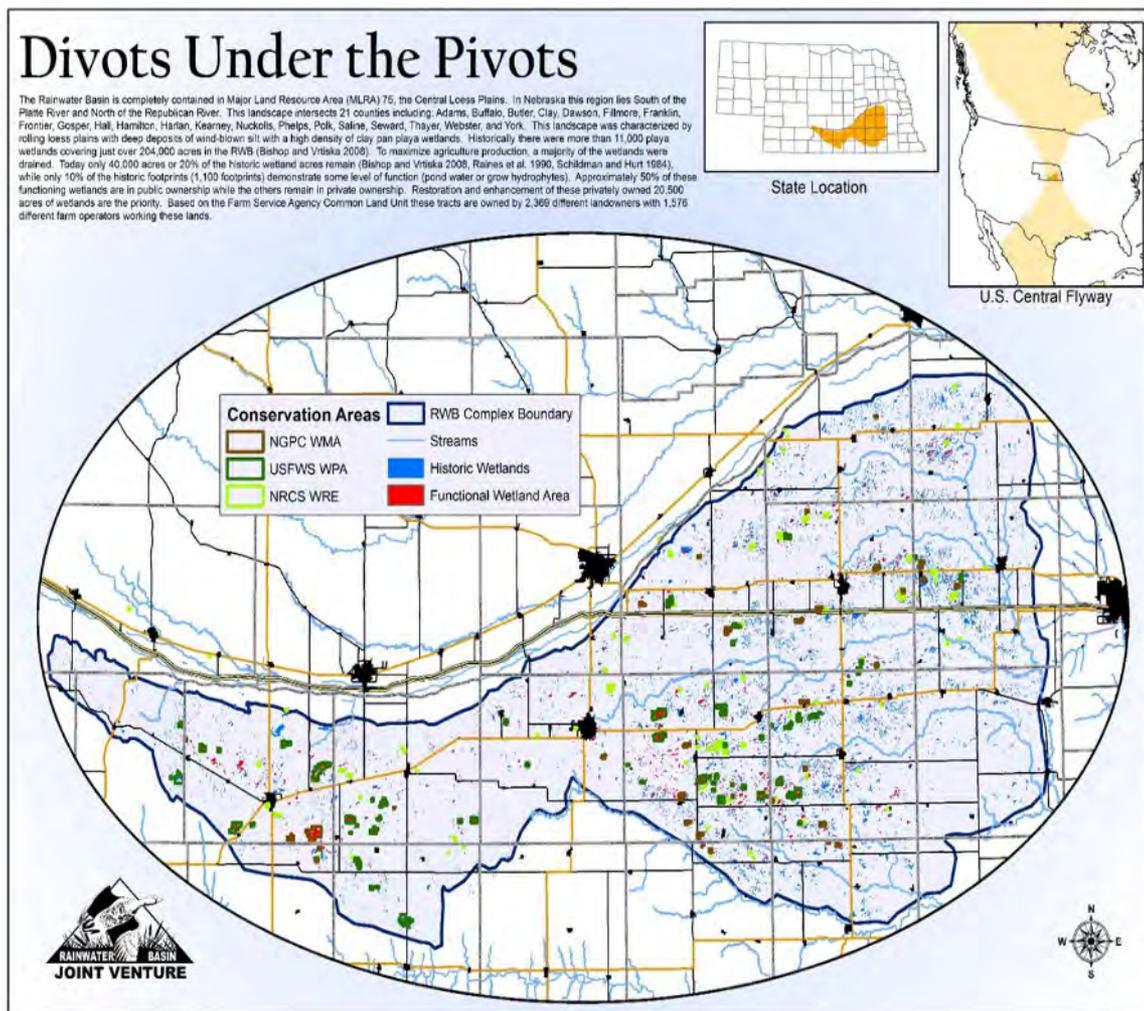
- \$2.1 million allocated
- Additional FA approved = \$500,000
- Received one year no cost extension
Expires: 08/08/2021



RCCP - Nebraska

Divots in the Pivots (2017)

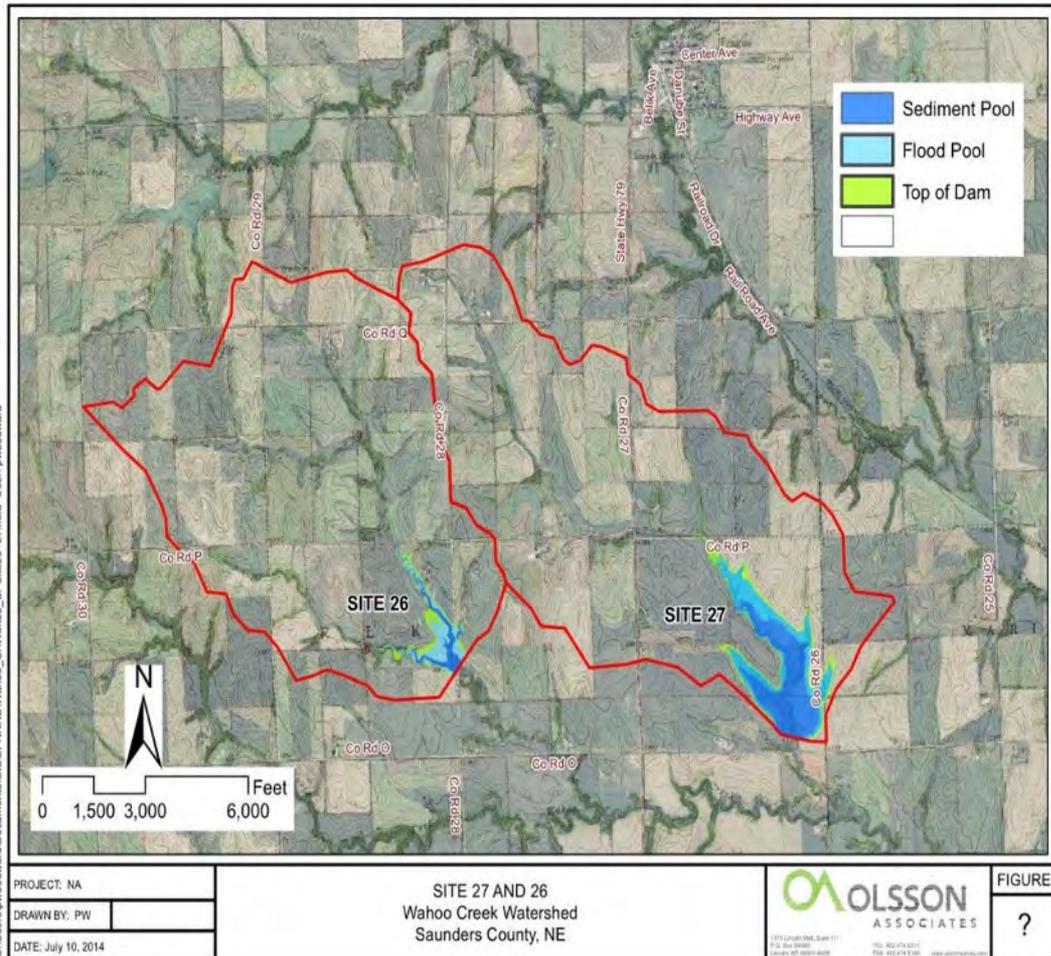
- UBBNRD and RWBJV Partners
- Combination of ACEP-ALE, ACEP-WRE and EQIP
- \$1.8 million
- Expires 09/30/2022



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**

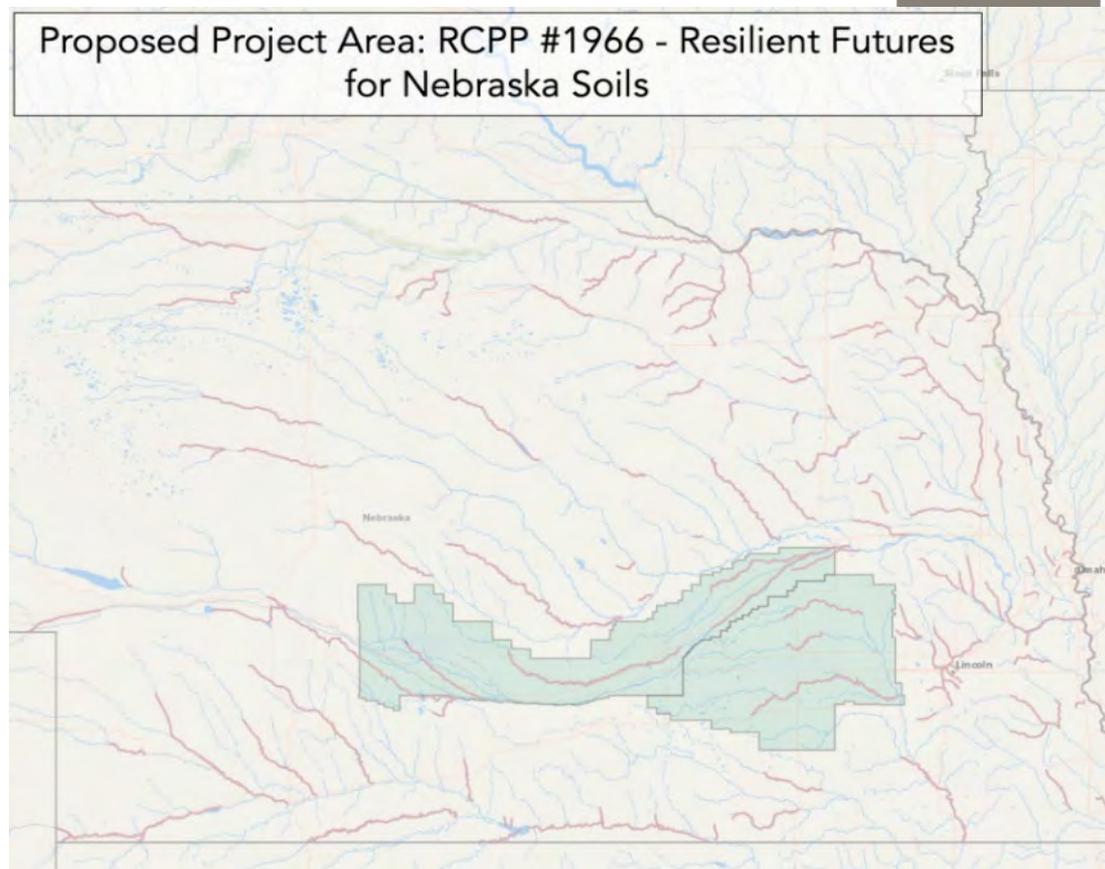
Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

- **FY 2020 Awards (FY19 APF)**
 - 4 proposals received involving Nebraska
 - Awarded 1 RCPP project announced mid April 2020
 - Programmatic Partnership Agreement (PPA) executed December 2020 with TNC.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

Resilient Futures for NE Soils

- TNC – Lead Partner
- ~ \$4.4 million
 - 3.1 million FA
 - Potential 5yr project



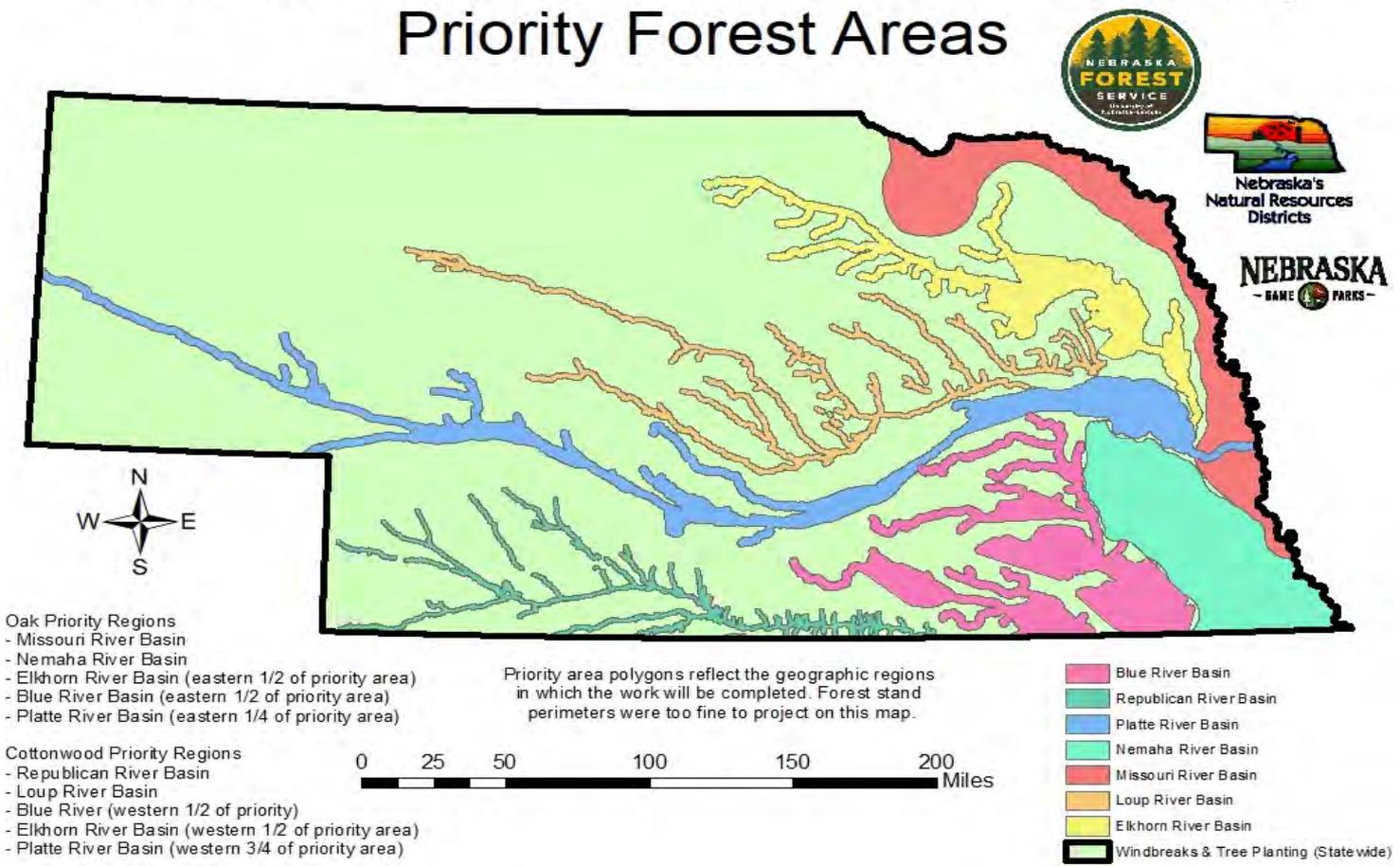
Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

- **Proposal Deadlines/Award Announcements – RCPP AFA**
 - **FY 2020 RCPP-AFA – proposal deadline was May 29th**
 - ❑ One Nebraska project selected
 - **FY 2021 RCPP-AFA – funding announcement release in December 2020.**

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

- Awarded RCPP-AFA-2021 – Agreement in development (10 Projects were funded)

Nebraska Forest Restoration Partnership Priority Forest Areas



Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

• Proposal Deadlines/Award Announcements – RCPP Classic

➤ **FY 2020/2021 RCPP Classic funding announcement released August 6, 2020**

- Grants.gov: **USDA-NRCS-NHQ-RCPPC-21-NOFO0001033**
- Proposals due date was extended to **November 30, 2020**
- Awards will be announced **March 2021**



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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 –funding announcements in late winter/early spring



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National CIG

- **2019 National CIGs – in Nebraska**

- University of Nebraska – Accelerating adoption of water conservation technologies and management practices through innovative engagement programming (Testing Ag Performance Solutions - TAPS) (**\$850,000** - NE, OK, CO, KS)
- MAD Agriculture – Combining innovative finance with carbon farm planning and training to scale conservation with organic crop and carbon markets. (**\$817,000** - MT, NE, CO)
- University of Hawaii – Forecasting daily reference evapotranspiration and rainfall for water resources conservation and sustainable agriculture. (**\$900,000** - HI, GU, NE, CA, MP)



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National CIG

- **2020 National CIGs**

Official Announcement of Awards after December



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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 - funding announcements in late winter/early spring



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CIG On-Farm Trials

- **2019 On-Farm Trials in Nebraska**
 - University of Nebraska – Adoption of Precision Ag Nitrogen Management through Nebraska On-Farm Research Network (**\$1,267,747 – NE**)
 - Soil & Water Conservation Society - Advancing precision ag & soil health with retailers (**\$1,453,232 – NE, KS, IA**)
 - Colorado Conservation Tillage Association – Farmers for Advancing Regenerative Management Systems (FARMS) (**\$1,672,546 – CO, KS, NE**)
 - National Fish & Wildlife Foundation – Measures of holistic soil health management – Cooperate Supply Chain (**\$3,000,000 – IN, MI, OH, NY, PA, TX, NM, KS, NE, ID, UT**)



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CIG On-Farm Trials

- **2020 On-Farm Trials in Nebraska**

- Michigan State University – Reduce N fertilizer losses through N application rates & replacing row crop with restored native vegetation. (**\$2,571,064** – MI, IA, IN, IL, **NE**, SD, KS, MS, TX, VA, MO)
- University of Illinois – Deploy data intensive crop management system base on on-farm precision experiments (**\$4,000,000** – ID, IL, LA, MN, MT, **NE**, SD, TX, WA)
- North Carolina State University – Adds new row crop farmers to existing network of producers for online learning. (**\$2,003,778** – VT, PA, MD, NH, OH, VA, TN, NC, SC, GA, FL, AL, MS, AR, WI, IN, SD, KS, **NE**, OK, TX, IA, MO)



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Conservation Innovation Grants

National Funding Announcements for 2021

National Classic – TBD (early spring)

On-Farm Trials – TBD (early spring)

Information and Funding Announcements:

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/cig/>



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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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Bureau of Land Reclamation - WaterSMART

WaterSMART Program



The EQIP WaterSMART Landscape Conservation Initiative supplements the Bureau of Reclamation WaterSMART Program –Water Conservation and Efficiency Grants.

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EQIP WaterSMART Initiative



FY21 Project Proposals Approved

Middle Republican NRD \$ 500,000

Priority Resource Concern:

Irrigation Water Use Inefficiency

Upper Republican NRD \$ 250,000

Priority Resource Concerns:

Irrigation Water Use Inefficiency

Nutrients Transported to Groundwater

Plant Productivity and Health

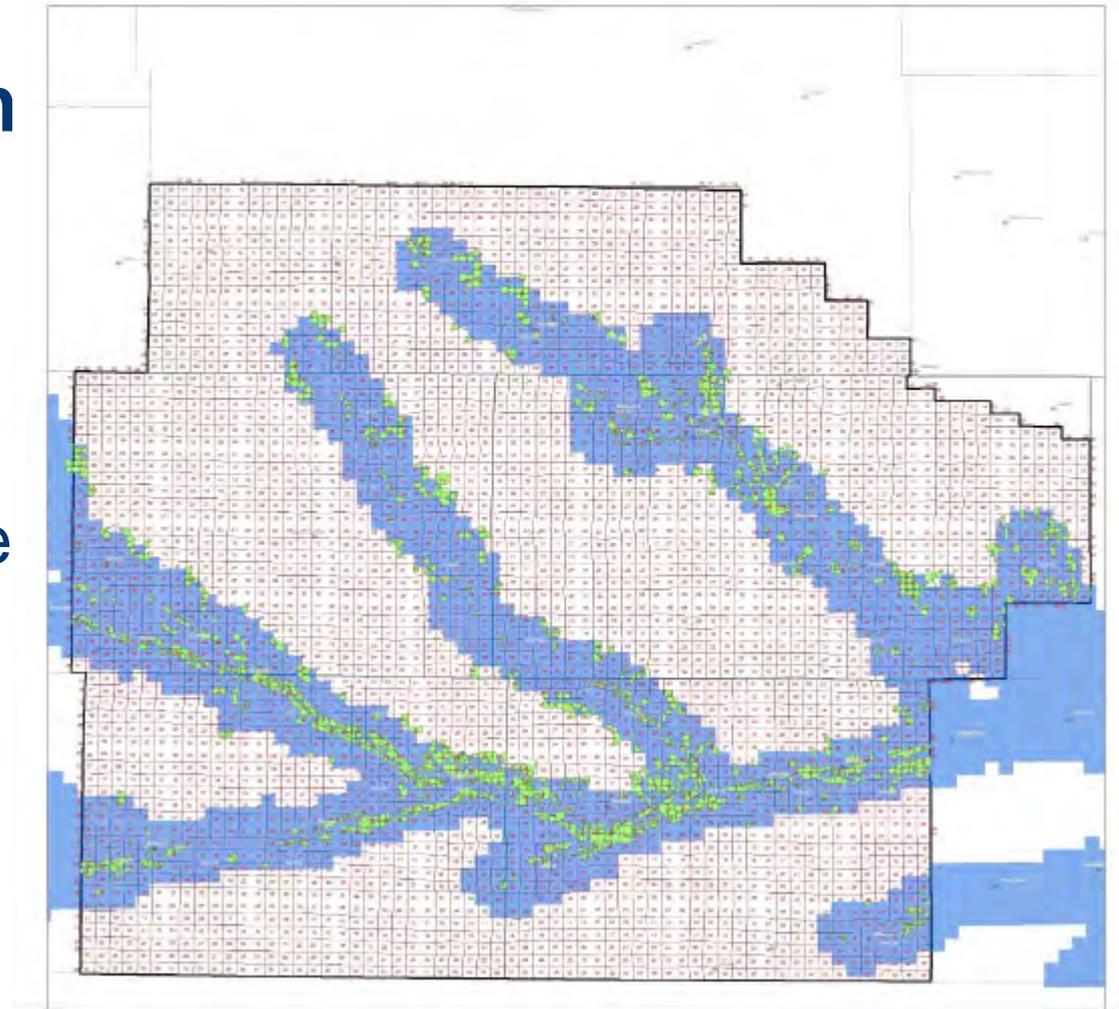
EQIP WaterSMART Initiative



MRNRD Quick Response Acres

Middle Republican NRD

Reduce consumptive use within the Quick Response area.



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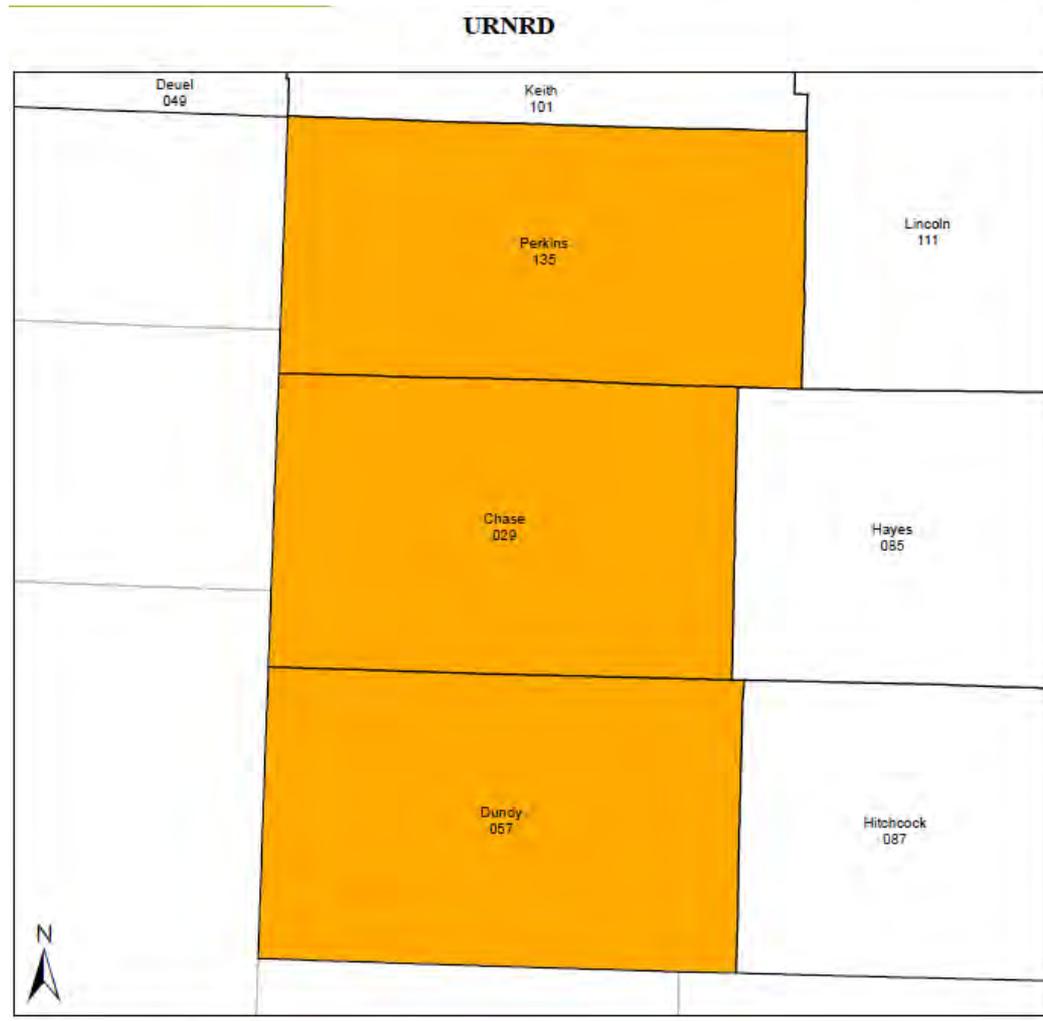


EQIP WaterSMART Initiative



Upper Republican NRD

Improve
water
efficiency
applied &
annual
reduction of
water use.



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EQIP WaterSMART Initiative



Information about the EQIP WaterSMART Initiative at the National NRCS Landscape Initiatives website:

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/initiatives/>

Landscape Initiatives



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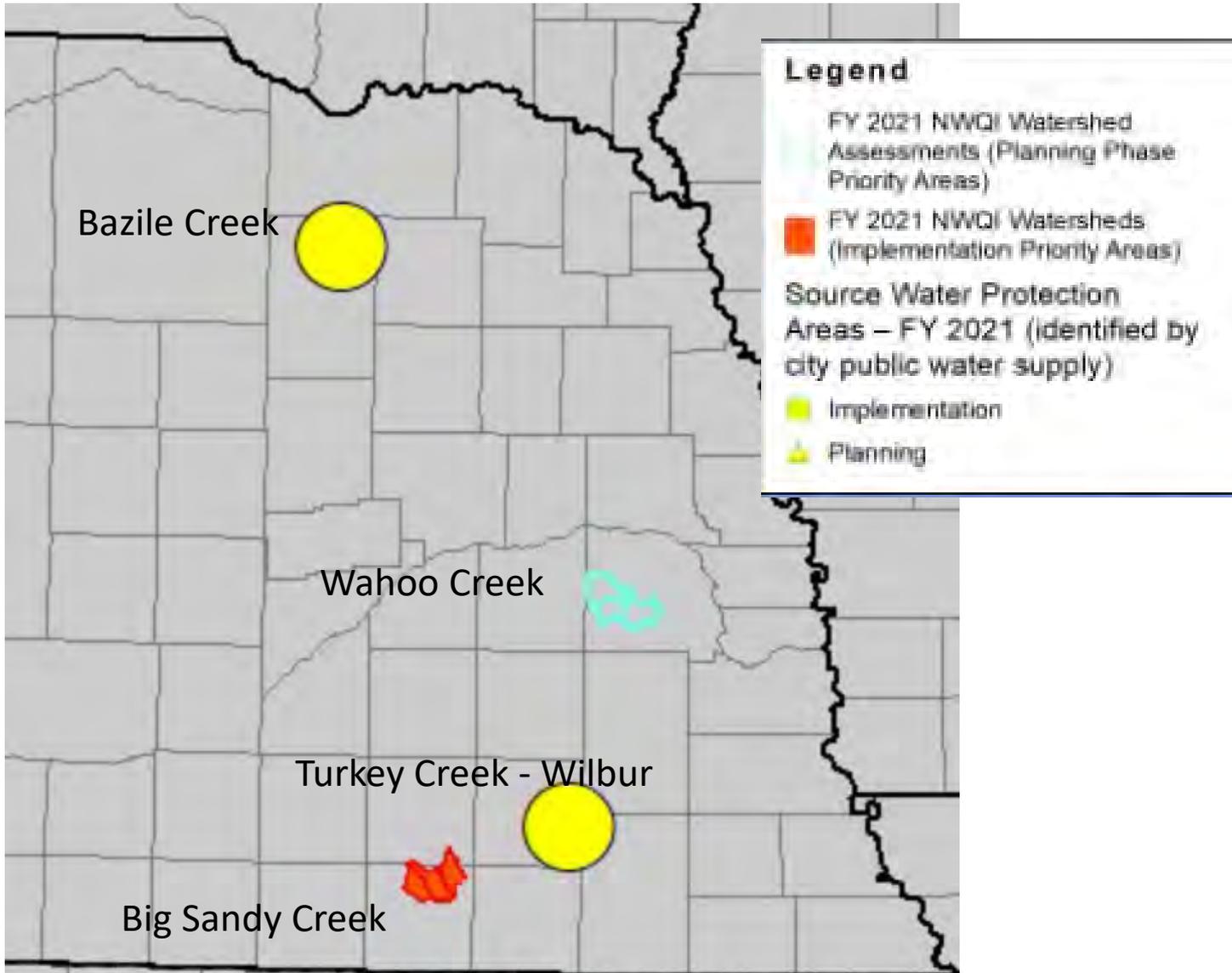


NATIONAL WATER QUALITY INITIATIVE (NWQI)

National Water Quality Initiative

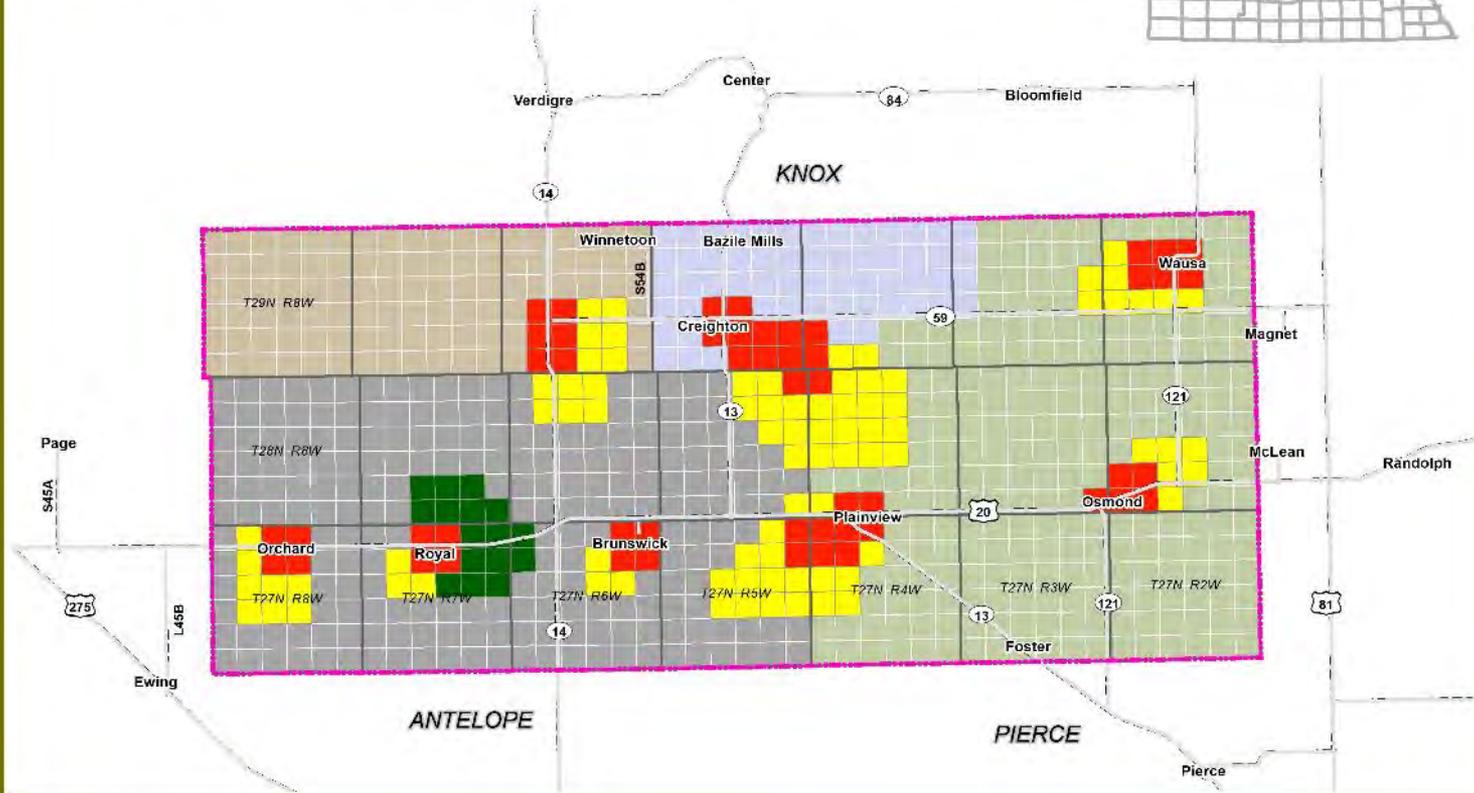
- **Wahoo Creek** – Lower Platte North NRD
- **Bazile Creek** – Lower Elkhorn NRD, Lewis and Clark NRD, Upper Elkhorn NRD
- **Big Sandy Creek** – Little Blue NRD
- **Turkey Creek** – Lower Big Blue NRD

NWQI FY 2021 Watersheds and Source Water Protection Areas



BAZILE GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT AREA

A conservation effort to reduce groundwater nitrates to levels below the drinking water standard



Legend

- Tier 1** ■ Public Water Supply, 20-year time of travel
- Tier 2** ■ Public Water Supply, 50-year time of travel
- Tier 3** ■ East Branch Verdigre Creek Watershed
- Tier 4** Bazile Groundwater Management Area Boundary

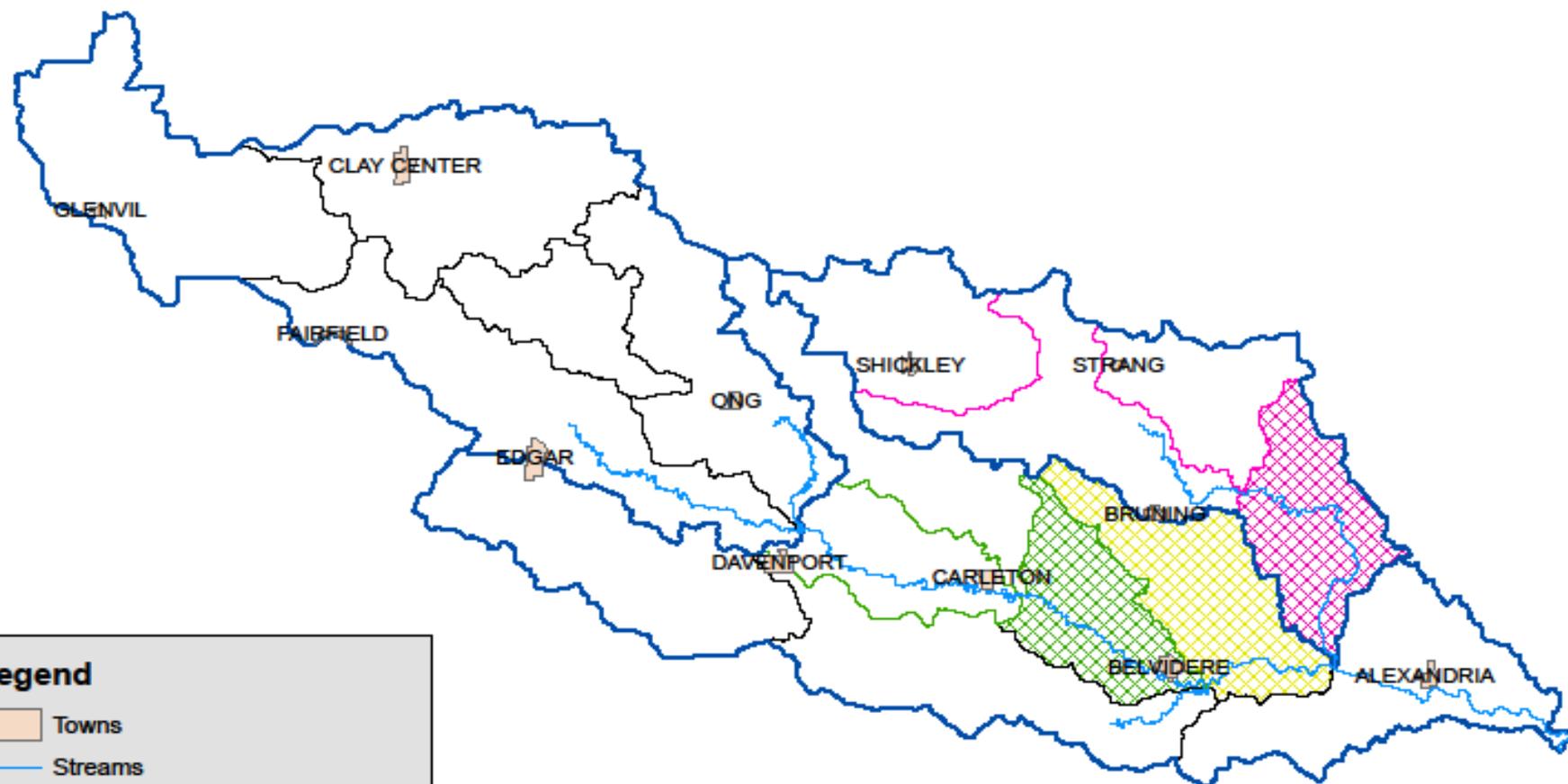
NRD Boundary Intersect

- LEWIS & CLARK
- LOWER ELKHORN
- LOWER NIOBRARA
- UPPER ELKHORN



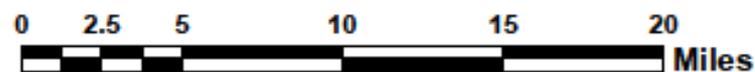


Big Sandy Creek - NWQI Target Watersheds

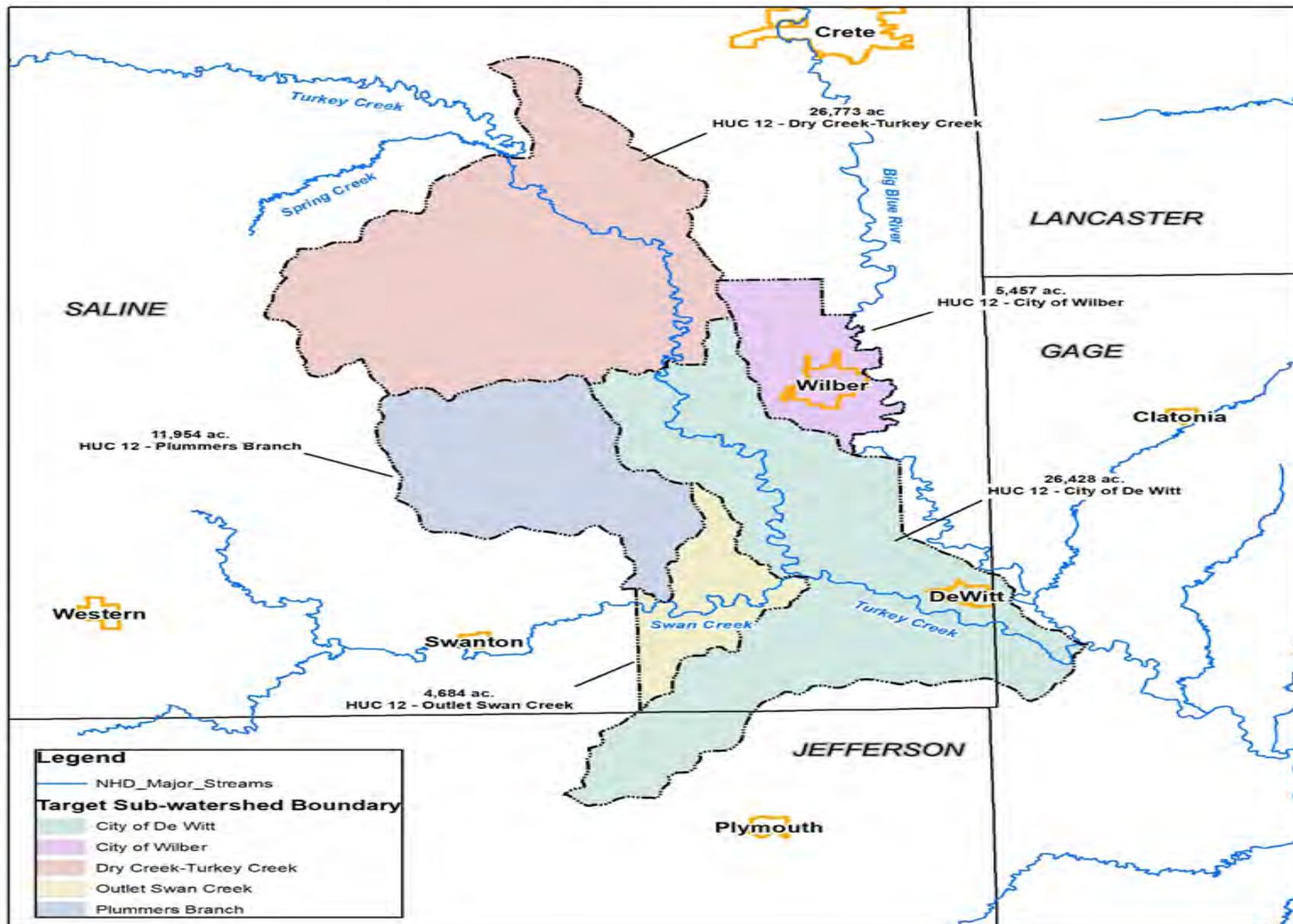


Legend

- 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



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

Dunlop Creek-Wahoo Creek
102002030703

Miller Branch-Wahoo Creek
102002030704

WAHOO

Wahoo Creek
Category 5
Impaired at this point

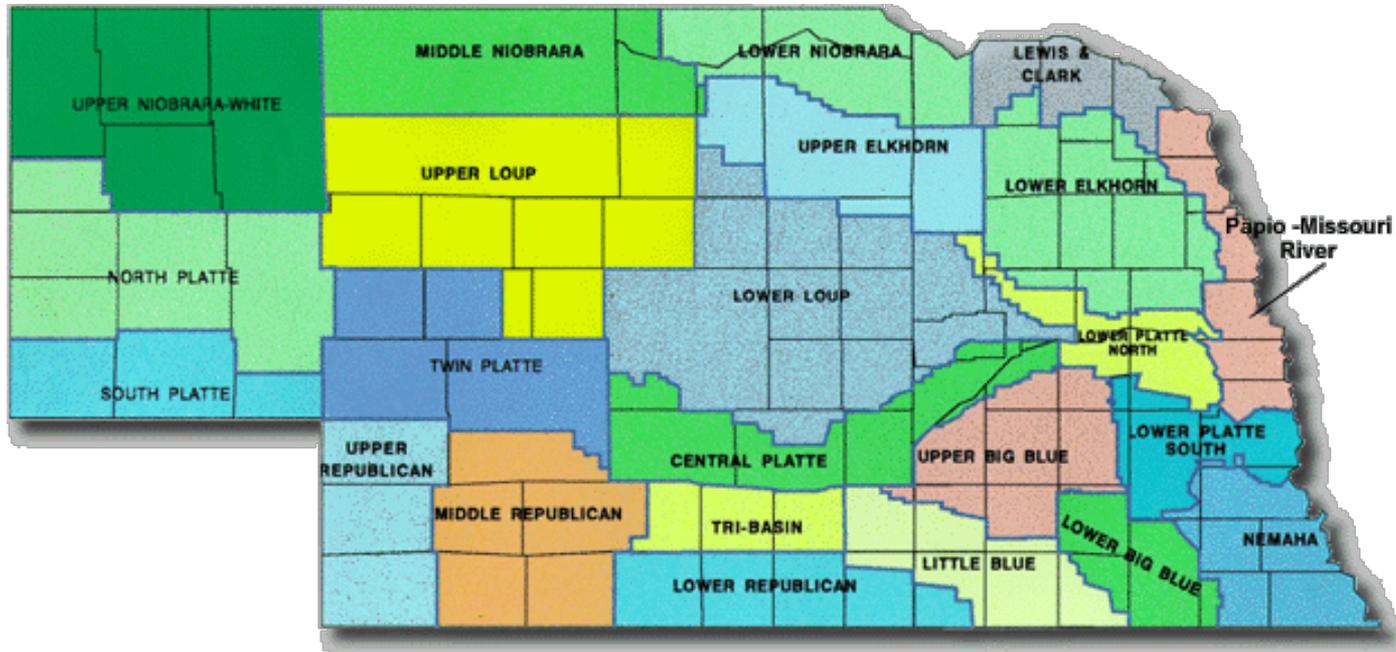
Legend

 Selected HUC12s



- **FY2021 NWQI Allocation = \$1.8 Million**
 - Big Sandy = \$285,000
 - Wahoo Creek = \$0
 - Bazile Creek = \$855,000
 - Turkey Creek = \$712,000

FY2021 LOCAL WORK GROUP MEETINGS



LOCAL WORK GROUP MEETINGS

- Meetings completed in January/February 2021
- *LOCAL WORK GROUP AGENDA ITEMS:*
 - Priority Resource Concerns
 - Fund Pools - Ranking Tools – Screening Tools
 - Practice Payment Schedule
 - Local issues



QUESTIONS?