



Natural Resources Conservation Service

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NEWS RELEASE

Tennessee NRCS Announces Sign-up Opportunity for Aquatic Habitat for At Risk Species in Eastern Tennessee

Deadline to apply is Friday, March 26, 2021

NASHVILLE, February 24, 2021- The United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) encourages interested eligible agricultural producers to sign up for the Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership – Aquatic Habitat for At Risk Species in Eastern Tennessee. The deadline to apply is **Friday, March 26, 2021**.

The proposed project area includes the Cherokee National Forest as well as private lands within three miles of the forest boundary, in nine counties: **Polk, McMinn, Monroe, Blount, Washington, Unicoi, Carter, Johnson, and Sullivan in eastern Tennessee.**

“The Aquatic for Habitat for At Risk Species in Eastern Tennessee project enables NRCS and the Forest Service to provide technical and financial assistance to agricultural producers and forest landowners in East Tennessee to address at-risk habit concerns, said Sheldon Hightower, Tennessee NRCS State Conservationist.

“We will work collaboratively to improve wildlife habitat for at-risk species in priority catchments within the Cherokee National Forest and adjacent areas.”

About the Aquatic Habitat for At Risk Species in Eastern Tennessee Project

The NRCS and the U.S. Forest Service will partner to invest more than **\$1.3 million** in technical and financial assistance for Aquatic Habitat for At Risk Species in Eastern Tennessee. The project goal is to apply multiple small-scale restorations strategically to achieve landscape scale conservation. It will do this by focusing efforts on 34 high priority catchments within the Cherokee National Forest and adjacent areas within three miles of the National Forest boundary.

Applying restorations in those areas substantially improves habitat and restored reaches are connected directly to at-risk source populations. Priority streams occur in both the North and South zones of Cherokee National Forest. The project aims to support Brook Trout, hellbenders, Tennessee Dace, and other at-risk aquatic species.

Agricultural producers and forest landowners interested in the Aquatic Habitat for At Risk Species in Eastern Tennessee Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership Project should contact their local [USDA service center](#) in Polk, McMinn, Monroe, Blount, Washington, Unicoi, Carter, Johnson, and Sullivan counties to see if their land is eligible.

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For more information about the USDA Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership or other NRCS Farm Bill programs, contact Jamie Carpenter at jamie.carpenter@usda.gov or (615) 277-2576. Information about Tennessee NRCS can be found at www.tn.nrcs.usda.gov.

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