

# NRCS Tennessee AT-A-GLANCE



February 2021

## FY 2020 Conservation... By the Numbers

The Tennessee Department of Agriculture provided **\$4.2 million** from the Agricultural Resources Conservation Fund (ARCF) for installation of Best Management Practices (BMPs).

NRCS provided technical assistance in planning, engineering or agronomic design and layout, and inspection of **2,109** BMPs.

- 17,595 customers assisted
- 84,399 conservation practices planned, 37,501 implemented
- 2,368 conservation plans written on 336,010 acres
- 5,812 conservation plans applied on 552,767 acres
- 212,298 acres of practices applied to improve environmental quality in the Conservation Technical Assistance program
- Outstanding year for CSP Classic!** Obligated more than **\$10.4 million** on **189** contracts
- 44 percent of EQIP funding and 17 percent of CSP funding obligated to contracts with Beginning Farmers
- 53 percent of EQIP funding and 25 percent of CSP funding obligated to contracts with Historically Underserved customers
- 57 contracts totaling **\$2.9 million** in 53 StrikeForce counties in Tennessee
- 6 ACEP-WRE easements closed for a total of 301 acres
- 634 acres restored from prior-year easements, including 7 WRE easements, 6 WRP easements, and enhancement repeal work
- \$7.6 million** expended in Emergency Watershed Protection Program funds for erosion control and debris removal caused by flooding.

NRCS greatly appreciates our partnerships with the 95 Soil Conservation Districts in Tennessee, Tennessee's Association of Conservation Districts (TACD), Department of Agriculture (TDA), Conservation District Employees Association (TCDEA), Resource Conservation and Development Councils (RC&D), and many others. Without them, we would not be able to reach our farmers and landowners to implement conservation systems through our voluntary programs on private lands in the state.

## FY 2020 Accomplishments

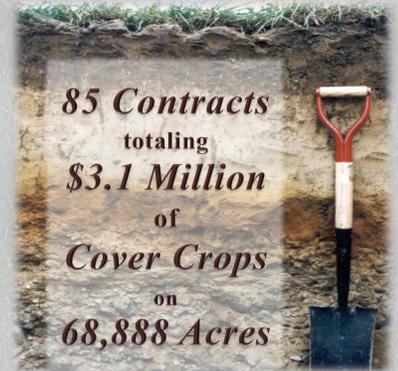
Despite the tough challenges marked with the COVID-19 pandemic and several natural disasters that occurred in FY2020, Tennessee NRCS continued to deliver services through innovative approaches to social distancing, adoption of virtual meetings across the state and enhanced online tools to ensure agricultural producers received top-notch customer service.

The focus over the past year has been on the delivery and implementation of our 2018 Farm Bill conservation programs to producers in Tennessee while also making strides to enhance efficiency and effectiveness to improve service to customers.

With continued prioritization on the adoption of soil health management systems, NRCS provided financial assistance totaling approximately **\$3.1 million** to help producers plan to plant cover crops on **68,888 acres**. In addition, the agency:

- Treated over **447,000 acres** of land to improve water quality and reduce soil erosion, which exceeded the FY2020 target for Conservation Technical Assistance.
- Improved Soil Quality on **164,711 acres** of Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) cropland.
- Funded **94 contracts totaling \$4.9 million on 9,167 acres** through the EQIP Landscape Conservation Initiatives<sup>1</sup>
- Exceeded the National target of **50 percent** of Livestock and **10 percent** of Wildlife.

NRCS, through the hard work and dedication of its more than 190 employees, continues to help put conservation on the ground and looks forward to another successful year in FY 2021.



## Program Highlights - FY 2020

Last year, approximately **\$60 million** was obligated in Farm Bill funding and **\$26.5 million** in technical assistance to help Tennessee land users, units of local and state government, communities, and other Federal agencies with planning and implementing conservation systems.

Farm Bill Program	Obligated Funds	Number of Contracts	Total Acres
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)	\$35.96M	1,216	141,216
Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)	\$14.16M <sup>2</sup>	189 in CSP Classic and Renewals and 154 in CSP Grassland Conservation Initiative (GCI)	103,071 in CSP Classic and Renewals and 4,992 in CSP GCI
Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)	\$775,767	28	4,251
Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)	\$4.5M	1 new WREP agreement and 6 new WRE agreements	1,184

<sup>1</sup> EQIP Landscape Conservation Initiatives includes Joint Chiefs' Restoration Watershed Project, National Water Quality Initiative, EQIP-Disaster Relief, and Working Lands for Wildlife Golden-Winged Warbler.

<sup>2</sup> Total amount obligated for renewals and new FY2020 CSP-Classic and CSP-GCI contracts.



### Our Mission

We deliver conservation solutions so agricultural producers can protect natural resources and feed a growing world.

### Our Vision

A world of clean and abundant water, healthy soils, resilient landscapes, and thriving agricultural communities through voluntary conservation.

Visit our website at: [www.tn.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.tn.nrcs.usda.gov)



Helping People Help the Land

## Tennessee State Map (NRCS Area Boundaries)



## NRCS — Who We Are...What We Do

Simply put—NRCS in Tennessee helps American farmers make conservation work for them through its science-based conservation planning and implementation. The system of practices we promote helps farmers improve production, reduce input costs, and conserve natural resources for the future. We also provide financial resources to help with the costs involved with getting conservation on the ground and improving soil health, water and air quality, and other natural resource benefits.

As of January 2021, there were **196 NRCS employees (including 7 current Pathways Intern Students)** working in Tennessee throughout **72 USDA Service Centers** in the state. In FY 2020, NRCS partnerships included **32 new and existing Contribution, Cooperative Grant, Agricultural Conservation Easements and Regional Conservation Partnership agreements totaling roughly \$7.2 million** that supported an estimated **65 field positions**. Our Earth Team Volunteers were also instrumental in helping us put conservation on the ground. Last year, **2,578 volunteers donated 11,938 hours** to help Tennessee NRCS lead the nation in its volunteer efforts and meet its mission of helping people help the land. These volunteer contributions earned Tennessee national recognition in the National Earth Team Volunteer Program for two straight years.

NRCS is helping to ensure the health of our natural resources and the long-term sustainability of American agriculture. Our **Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA)** program is the foundation of our financial and technical assistance delivery system. It provides land users with proven conservation technology needed to achieve the benefits of a healthy and productive landscape. According to numerous agricultural resources, Tennessee has roughly **26 million acres** of land, of which **89 percent** is privately owned. Furthermore, **11 million acres—or 41 percent—**are farmlands.

Soil



### About Our Programs...

**Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)** - EQIP offers financial and technical assistance to eligible producers to help install or implement conservation practices on eligible agricultural land.

Water



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

Air



**Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)** - This program provides financial and technical assistance to help conserve agricultural lands and wetlands and their related benefits. ACEP contains an Agricultural Land Easements (ALE) and a Wetlands Reserve Easements (WRE) component.

Plants



**Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)** - RCPP is merit-based and targets specific vulnerable areas and is administered through partnership agreements and through program contracts or easement agreements.

Animals



## Tennessee Goals FY 2021

Implement 2018 Farm Bill



Increase participation in Local Work Groups and State Technical Committee meetings



Continue to be technically sound in delivering conservation to our producers

Use technology to increase efficiencies

Maintain the Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee Southeast Leadership Development Program

Expand our conservation partnerships

Continue to promote and elevate Soil Health activities across Tennessee

Increase program participation of Historically Underserved, Beginning, Veteran and Women Farmers

Train and mentor NRCS employees and partners

Continue to be visible and tell our story