NRCS Informational Webinar

“Public Works & Watershed”

Presentation will begin promptly at 3 pm
Webinar Hosts

Laura Williams
NRCS - WA
RCPP State Coordinator
Laura.Williams@USDA.gov

Alexandra James
Skagit Conservation District
RCPP Easement Liaison
alex@skagitcd.org
Housekeeping

Recorded Session

1 Hour Session with Q&A

Participants Muted with Video Off

Submit Questions via Chat
RCPP Webinar Series

1. An Introduction to RCPP, hosted by Laura Williams
   October 18, 3-4 pm

2. RCPP & Conservation Easements, hosted by Alex James
   October 25, 3-4 pm

3. Watershed & Public Works, hosted by Laura Williams
   November 1, 3-4 pm

4. Developing an RCPP Proposal, hosted by Laura Williams
   November 8, 3-4 pm
RCPP
Prerequisites
Assumptions

This presentation is not intended to introduce RCPP Classic

Assumes Audience has:

- Read the NFO
- Watched introductory presentation
- Both – BEST
RCPP Classic 2.0 Projects- Purpose

An RCPP Project is a Partnership Agreement

NRCS and partners co-invest to implement projects that address significant conservation challenges

NRCS activities (FA & TA) are coordinated with partner value-added significant contributions to address the resource concerns with greater impact than either would solely.
RCPP Classic Introduction

- Eligibility-Partner and Landowner
- RCPP 4 Pillars
  - Impact
  - Innovation
  - Partnership and Management
  - Partner Contribution
- Outcome-what is it?
- NRCS FA, TA
- Partnership and Supplemental Agreement
Presentation Goal

• Improve Partner Proposals
  • Public Works or Watershed Component

• Competitive:
  • 5 Proposals submitted with PW or Watershed, 0 funded
  • 2019- 34% of proposals submitted funded
  • 2020-2021- 47% of proposals submitted funded (avg of 23.5% per year)
Eligible Activities
Eligible Activities

• Land Management – **Producer Contract**
• Public Works/ Watershed projects - **Producer Contracts or Supplemental Agreement**

• Rentals – **Producer Contract**
• Easements-project purpose - **Supplemental Agreement**
• Entity held Easements: similar to ACEP-ALE
• US held easements: similar to ACEP-WRE & HFRP
Public Works Eligible Activities

• **Public Works Watershed**
  - PL 566 model and policies

• **Land Management** –
  - EQIP/CSP LIKE model and policies
  - Utilizes EQIP Practices & CSP enhancements
    - [RCPP Practice Scenarios and Payment Schedule](https://nrcs.usda.gov)
Public Works = Public Land

Two Limited Circumstances*

1. A watershed/public works structure is constructed on public lands but the benefits (e.g., flood control, water supply) accrue to **private agricultural lands**.

2. A producer who has demonstrated control of a patchwork of private and public lands seeks to apply a land management activity across the full acreage of the operation.

*National Funding Opportunity (NFO)
Public Works

Required-
• Not in competition with other Farm Bill Programs:
  • Public works tied to producer contracts to achieve goal
    a. Producer contracts must occur at same time or soon thereafter (within 5 years);
    b. Innovation with producer contracts or public works
  • Their must be some innovation with public works construction, producer contracts or partner contribution
Public Works Projects

1. Land Management Contract
   • Established NRCS LM Practices (EQIP/CSP type)

2. PL-566 Watershed Projects
   a. Must follow Watershed Manual
      i. National Watershed Program Manual
Land Management Public Works

1. Land Management Producer Contracts
   • Less complex than Public Works Watershed
   • Design & construction completed in 5 years
   • Design work funded through a TA Supplemental Agreement Type I
   • Construction will be funded through Supplemental Agreement Type III
   • Project partner has control of the land
     ▪ Lease, release or Operation/Management clause
     ▪ Life of contracts
   • Ag Producers will be ID by name or contract #
   • Related LM Producer Contracts
Land Management- Public Works

ProTips:

1. Identify specific producers that will benefit from the Public Works project in the proposal

2. Include in the proposal a project timeline for Design, construction, and associated producer contracts.
Land Management Watershed

2. PL566 Watershed-
   a. Must follow Watershed Manual-
      a. NRCS eDirectives - Parts 500-506 - National Watershed Program Manual (usda.gov)
   b. Requires a Watershed Plan
      ii. NEPA in Watershed Plan
      iii. All engineering designs and other work
      iv. Requires 2-3 years
      v. Very expensive-
      vi. Completed Before any construction begins
Land Management Watershed

c. Control of the land
   - Lease, release or Operation/Management clause
   - Life of contracts

d. Specific eligible producers identified by name or producer contract #
   - In Proposal

e. Related producer contracts managed
   - To begin after watershed plan completed
   - Contract less than a year before public infrastructure complete
   - Or include small contract components.
PL-566 Manual

1. **RCPP eligible PL566 funding purpose** - must directly benefit produces – more restrictive
   - Flood Prevention (Flood Damage Reduction)
   - Watershed Protection
   - Agricultural Water Management
   - Water Quality Management
   - Watershed Structure Rehabilitation
   - Public Fish and Wildlife - channel fixing fish ladders in canal that gives water to farmers
PL-566 Manual

2. PL566 eligible - NOT eligible in RCPP Projects:
   - Public Recreation-
   - Municipal and Industrial Water Supply
   - Restoration – Restoring NRCS previously funded construction

3. Match Requirement –
   - Cannot be from another federal funding source
   - Can double as Partner Contribution if contributed during Project period

4. Identified Sponsoring Local Organization (SLO)
5. **Sponsor Responsibilities** - project partners

- i. Power of Eminent Domain*
- ii. Procure Permits and Licenses
- iii. Authority to Levy Taxes*
- iv. Public Participation
- v. Financial-match requirements
- vi. Watershed Management
- vii. Operation and Maintenance - Not to exceed 100 years

*Can be waived if proposal requests AND demonstrates not needed
PL-566 Manual

6. There are 4 primary steps:
   i. Preliminary Feasibility Study –
      • identifies needs, economics, issues
   ii. Application for Watershed Planning Assistance –
      • RCPP Proposal Application
   iii. Watershed Plan/EA or EIS Development
   iv. Watershed Plan Implementation
PL-566 Manual

7. Timeline

i. Preliminary Feasibility Study
   • 3 to 6 months (funding cycle timing critical)

ii. RCPP Proposal Application, Review & Award-
   • 3 to 5 months

iii. Partnership Agreement and Supplemental Agreement
   • 4-6 months

iv. Watershed Planning
   • 2 to 4 years

v. Watershed Plan Implementation –
   • 3 to 8 Years
   • Public works construction
   • Associated Land Management Contracts in RCPP
**Example RCPP Watershed Timeline**

Project Period Nov 30, 2021 thru Nov 30, 2026

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Start</th>
<th>End</th>
<th>Milestone</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11/30/2021</td>
<td>11/30/2021</td>
<td>11/30/2021</td>
<td>RCPP Application Due</td>
<td>2 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/20/2022</td>
<td>2/20/2022</td>
<td>2/20/2022</td>
<td>RCPP Award</td>
<td>2-3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/30/2022</td>
<td>4/30/2022</td>
<td>4/30/2022</td>
<td>Programmatic Partnership Agreement-</td>
<td>2 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/30/2022</td>
<td>6/30/2022</td>
<td>6/30/2022</td>
<td>Supplimental Agreements</td>
<td>2 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/15/2022</td>
<td>3/1/2023</td>
<td>3/1/2023</td>
<td>Preliminary Feasibility Study</td>
<td>8 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/1/2023</td>
<td>3/1/2025</td>
<td>3/1/2025</td>
<td>Watershed Plan + NEPA</td>
<td>2-4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/1/2025</td>
<td>5/1/2027</td>
<td>5/1/2027</td>
<td>Watershed Plan Implementation</td>
<td>3-8 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/1/2027</td>
<td>5/1/2029</td>
<td>5/1/2029</td>
<td>Land management Contracts</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/30/2027</td>
<td>5/1/2029</td>
<td>5/1/2029</td>
<td>Project end</td>
<td>5 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Not Enough Time**
RCPP Proposed Timeline

**Prior to RCPP Proposal**

i. Preliminary Feasibility Study – 3 to 6 months (funding cycle timing critical)

ii. Watershed Planning – 2 to 4 years

**RCPP Proposal Application, Review & Award**

iii. Partnership Agreement and Supplemental Agreement – 4 to 6 months

iv. Watershed Plan Implementation – 3 to 8 Years

v. RCPP Land Management Contracts - 1 to 3 Years
RCPP Proposed Timeline Benefits

1. Couple Watershed, LM and other innovation within RCPP Timeline
2. Preliminary Feasibility study complete
   • Ensures project can be completed
   • Identifies issues or difficulties to overcome
3. Sponsors identified needed Land Management producer contract recipients (required for RCPP funding)
4. Partner Contributions add value that enhance project / could not be accomplished otherwise
RCPP Proposed Timeline

4. Watershed Plan- supports proposal (e.g. proposal based on Watershed Plan)
5. Partner contributions can be ‘less’ because the cost of Watershed Plan not included
6. Complete Public works construction and associated Producer Land Management contracts in 5 year RCPP Project
RCPP Watershed Project

ProTips:
1. Project timeline – separate document
2. Project Resume- staff, contractors, organizations and their role/responsibility
3. Valuation of staff and construction costs
   1. Spreadsheet with hourly wages, totals for project components/objectives, quotations for activities etc.
4. Detailed map with project activities
5. Supporting Watershed Plan
Resources
RESOURCES

- RCPP Practice Scenarios and Payment Schedule
- RCPP How To Apply Webpage:
  - Overview of RCPP Classic (webinar)
  - RCPP Partner’s Proposal Guide for RCPP Classic and Renewals (PDF, 2.4MB)
  - National Funding Opportunity (past and present once released)
  - FY 20-21 RCPP Classic FAQs - 2020.9.10 (PDF, 151KB)
  - State RCPP Coordinators - As of August 21, 2020 (PDF, 85KB)
  - Sample Letter of Commitment (DOCX, 39KB)
  - Outcomes Guidance (PDF, 159KB)
  - RCPP Entity Held Easements Minimum Deed Terms
Resources

• **Webinar Series**
  • Video links
    • [NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program Presentation – YouTube](https://www.youtube.com)
    • [RCPP & Conservation Easements - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com)
  • WA RCPP Webpage- video links and slides
      • Updated Nov 2-3, 2021
Q & A

• Ask questions via Chat feature.
• Questions will be answered in order.
• Remaining questions will be answered and emailed to participants.