



NEW HAMPSHIRE

Conservation Districts

Belknap County Conservation District
2 Airport Rd., Unit 1
Gilford, NH 03249
603-527-5580
www.belknapccd.org

Carroll County Conservation District
P.O. Box 533
Conway, NH 03818
603-447-2771

Cheshire County Conservation District
11 Industrial Park Dr.
Walpole, NH 03608
603-756-2988
www.cheshireconservation.org

Coos County Conservation District
4 Mayberry Lane
Lancaster, NH 03584
603-788-4651
www.cooscountyconservation.org/

Grafton County Conservation District
19 Archertown Rd., Suite 1
Orford, NH 03777
603-353-4651
www.graftonccd.org

Hillsborough County Conservation District
#468, Rte. 13 South, Milford, NH 03055
603-673-2409
www.hillsboroughccd.com

Merrimack County Conservation District
10 Ferry St., Suite 211
Concord, NH 03301
603-223-6023
www.merrimackccd.org

Rockingham County Conservation District
110 North Rd., Brentwood, NH 03833
603-679-2790
www.rockinghamccd.org

Strafford County Conservation District
264 County Farm Rd., Dover, NH 03820
603-749-3037
www.straffordccd.org

Sullivan County Conservation District
95 County Farm Rd.
Unity, NH 03743
603-542-4891
www.sullivancountynh.gov

New Hampshire Association of Conservation Districts:

www.nhacd.net

Help for beginner, veteran, limited-resource, and historically underserved farmers

The Agricultural Act of 2014, provides higher payments for land owners who qualify as beginning farmers, limited resource producers, or those who are "socially disadvantaged" because they belong to racial or ethnic groups that have historically been subjected to prejudice.



NRCS and conservation districts: partners in conservation

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is a federal agency that helps people help the land through scientifically based, locally led voluntary conservation efforts.

NRCS works in partnership with New Hampshire's ten conservation districts, which help identify and address natural resource concerns in local communities, and coordinate public and private resources to meet local needs on a grassroots level.

A conservation district is a division of state government established under state law to conserve and wisely manage resources and partner with state and federal agencies to deliver programs, education and technical assistance to their communities.

USDA is an equal opportunity employer, provider, and lender.



NRCS offices

New Hampshire State Office
273 Locust St. Suite 2D
Dover, NH 03820
603-868-7581
Richard P. Ellsmore,
State Conservationist
rick.ellsmore@nh.usda.gov

Concord Field Service Center
Serving Belknap and Merrimack Counties
10 Ferry St., Suite 211
Concord, NH 03301
603-223-6023

Conway Field Service Center
Serving Carroll and Belknap Counties
73 Main St.
Conway, NH 03818
603-447-2771

Epping Field Service Center
Serving Rockingham and Strafford Counties
629 Calef Highway, Suite 203
Epping, NH 03042
603-679-1587

Lancaster Field Service Center
Serving Coos County
4 Mayberry Lane
Lancaster, NH 03584
603-788-4651

Milford Field Service Center
Serving Hillsborough County
#468, Rte. 13 South
Milford, NH 03055
603-673-2409

Orford Field Service Center
Serving Grafton County
19 Archertown Rd., Suite 1
Orford, NH 03777
603-353-4651

Walpole Field Service Center
Serving Cheshire and Sullivan Counties
11 Industrial Park Dr.
Walpole, NH 03608
603-756-2988

www.nh.nrcs.usda.gov



Is this land your land? You need a conservation plan.

NRCS Guide to the 2014 Farm Bill Conservation Programs in New Hampshire

If you own or manage farmland or forest land, run a greenhouse, grow specialty crops, or farm organically in New Hampshire, then the 2014 Farm Bill conservation programs can help you address natural resource concerns and opportunities on your land.

You will need a plan -- a conservation plan, conservation activity plan (CAP), or a forest management plan -- to identify the resource concerns and conservation practices needed to meet your conservation and environmental objectives.

What is a conservation plan?

Developing a conservation plan is the first step in working with NRCS and applying for most USDA conservation programs.

A conservation plan provides a roadmap to sustaining or improving production while managing the natural resource base that supports your operation.

Conservation planning identifies objectives, resource limitations and opportunities, and evaluates alternatives to help you make decisions in managing your operation.

What is the 2014 Farm Bill?

The Agricultural Act of 2014 -- also known as the 2014 Farm Bill -- contains new conservation provisions that simplify existing federal programs while maintaining the conservation-based emphasis developed during the preceding three farm bills.

National priorities remain similar to the 2008 Farm Bill. These priorities include reducing non-point source pollution, soil erosion and emissions, conservation of ground and surface water, and protection of at-risk species.



Additional assistance is available for new, limited resource, and socially disadvantaged farmers (see back page).

Program Priorities in New Hampshire

- Water quality & conservation
Sustainable forest management
Soil quality & Integrated Pest Management (IPM)
Wildlife habitat enhancement
Wetland restoration
Conservation easements
Invasive species control

2014 Farm Bill Conservation Programs

- Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA)
Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA)
Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)
Agricultural Land Easements (ALE)
Wetlands Reserve Easements (WRE)
Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

details inside...



Helping People Help the Land

NRCS 2014 Farm Bill Programs in New Hampshire

The chart below describes the conservation programs authorized in the 2014 Farm Bill and available through NRCS in New Hampshire. These programs help reduce erosion, protect water quality in streams and rivers, restore and establish wildlife habitat, and improve air quality on our nation's lands. For more information contact your local USDA Service Center (listed on the back page of this pamphlet) or visit us online at www.nh.nrcs.usda.gov.

* A current list of eligible conservation practices and payment rates is posted on our website: www.nh.nrcs.usda.gov.

Program	Description	Who is eligible? What land is eligible?	Length and type of agreement	Financial incentives provided by USDA *	Participant obligations	What's new?
Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) Conservation Planning	CTA provides conservation planning services to private and public individuals, groups and entities.	Individuals, groups, entities, and units of government who own and/or manage land.	Cooperative agreement with local Conservation District	No payments are provided. Technical assistance is provided free of charge.	Directly participate in the planning process by providing information and developing goals for farm or forest lands.	N/A
Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA)	AMA helps mitigate risk through installing and maintaining conservation practices on the farm.	Private landowners or operators who own or manage land that produces crops or livestock where risk may be mitigated through operation diversification or change in resource conservation practices.	13 month to 10-year contract	Partial compensation for implementing approved conservation practices. \$50,000 payment limitation per year. Beginning, limited-resource, and socially disadvantaged farmers may be eligible for higher payment rates.	Install and maintain conservation practices to NRCS standards.	New adjusted gross income (AGI) requirements apply. The AGI limitation is now set at \$900,000.
Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)	CSP encourages private land stewards to maintain and enhance conservation performance through additional conservation activities.	Private landowners or operators who own or manage private farmland or non-industrial private forestland with existing conservation practices.	5 year contract with possible renewal	Annual payments for maintaining, and compensation for enhancing, existing conservation practices.	Maintain or increase level of land stewardship.	Limitation removed on the number of nonindustrial private forestland acres that can be enrolled in CSP, and increased flexibility to enroll land coming out of the Conservation Reserve Program. Payments are limited to \$200,000 between 2014 and 2018.
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)	EQIP helps promote farm and forest production and environmental quality by installing and maintaining conservation practices on private land.	Private landowners or operators who own or manage farmland, rangeland, pastureland or non-industrial forest land.	Up to 10 years	Partial compensation for the cost of implementing conservation practices. Beginning, limited-resource, and socially disadvantaged farmers may be eligible for higher payment rates.	Install and maintain conservation practices to NRCS standards.	The former Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program was folded into EQIP. Advance payment opportunities now exist for veteran agricultural producers. Advance payments for socially disadvantaged, beginning and limited resource farmers, Indian tribes and veterans were raised from 30 percent to 50 percent; payment limitations are set at \$450,000 between 2014 and 2018 with no ability to waive.
Agricultural Land Easements (ALE) (Part of ACEP)	ALE works in partnership with Land trusts, local government units, and other non-profits to protect agricultural lands through the purchase of conservation easements.	Privately-owned farmland that has productive agricultural use or historic or cultural resource significance.	Permanent easement	NRCS contributes up to 50 percent of the easement purchase based on appraised fair market value.	Maintain or increase level of agricultural land use and/or preserve sites with documented historic significance.	Where NRCS determines that grasslands of special environmental significance will be protected, NRCS may contribute up to 75 percent of the fair market value of the agricultural land easement.
Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE) (Part of ACEP)	WRE helps landowners and operators restore and protect degraded and latered wetlands on privately owned lands.	Wetlands owned by private individuals, groups or entities, where the functions and values have been degraded by the production of food or fiber sometime in its history. Wetland functions and values must be restorable and suitable for wildlife benefits. Publicly owned lands are not eligible.	Permanent easement	One time easement payment based on the lesser of: the appraised fair market value, Geographic Area Rate Cap, or landowner offer.	Maintain or restore wetlands as agreed. If restoration is needed, NRCS pays 100% of the cost for permanent easements; install and maintain restoration practices to NRCS standards.	NRCS pays between 75 to 100 percent of the restoration costs.
Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)	Promotes coordination between NRCS and its partners to deliver conservation assistance to producers and landowners.	Agricultural or silvicultural producer associations, farmer cooperatives or other groups of producers, state or local governments, American Indian tribes, municipal water treatment entities, water and irrigation districts, conservation-driven nongovernmental organizations and institutions of higher education.	NRCS provides assistance to producers through partnership agreements and through program contracts or easement agreements.	Eligible producers and landowners of agricultural land and non-industrial private forestland may enter into conservation program contracts or easement agreements under the framework of a partnership agreement and under the terms of other financial assistance programs.	Requirements of financial assistance program used.	RCPP combines the authorities of four former conservation programs – the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program, the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Program, the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative and the Great Lakes Basin Program.

FAQ frequently asked questions

How do I begin working with NRCS?

Contact your local USDA/NRCS Field Office to speak with one of our conservation professionals. Contact information is on the back page, or visit www.nh.nrcs.usda.gov.

Who is eligible to apply for NRCS Programs?

Eligibility requirements vary slightly depending on the program. Our programs are generally directed towards producers on agricultural and forest lands. There are some exceptions, so please contact your local USDA/NRCS Field Office.

For most NRCS programs, you will need to complete several forms and meet additional eligibility criteria. The following forms are available on our website or by calling an office:

- Conservation Program Application (CPA 1200)
- Member Information Form (CCC-901a)
- Direct Deposit Sign-up Form (SF-1199A)
- Highly Erodible Land Conservation Certification (AD-1026)
- Average Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) Form (CCC-941)

Are NRCS programs voluntary?

Participation in all NRCS programs is completely voluntary; however, NRCS programs providing financial assistance require compliance with the terms of a contract.

If I enroll my land in an easement program, do I retain ownership?

If you enroll your land under an easement or rental contract, you retain full ownership of the land. Your participation in the program will restrict some uses of the land during the terms of the agreement, but you maintain control of public access.

Glossary

Agricultural land: Cropland, grassland, pasture and other land on which agricultural and forest products or livestock are produced.

Conservation practice: A structural, vegetative or management measure to maintain or improve the condition, productivity, sustainability or usability of targeted resources. Examples include cover crops, nutrient management, manure storage facilities and wildlife habitat improvement.

Contract: A binding agreement for the transfer of financial and technical assistance from NRCS for the installation and maintenance of specific conservation practices as scheduled and agreed to by NRCS and the participant.

Easement: An interest in land defined in a deed, whereby the landowner conveys all development rights and interests while retaining rights of ownership and all reserved rights stated in the easement deed.

Limited-resource farmer: A farmer with limited financial resources.

Non-industrial forest land: Rural land that has existing tree cover or is suitable for growing trees and is owned by any non-industrial private individual, group, association, corporation, Indian tribe or other private legal entity that has definitive decision-making authority over the land.

Rental contract: A legal document that specifies the obligations and rights of the participant, including annual rental payments to be provided to the participant.

Resource Concern: Problem or opportunity with soil, water, air, plants or animal resources than can be addressed with conservation practices.

Historically Underserved or beginner farmer: People who belong to racial or ethnic groups that have historically been subjected to prejudice or a farmer who has been farming fewer than 10 years.