United States Department of Agriculture

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

Investing in Maine - 2016

Created by the 2014 Farm Bill, the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) is a partner-driven, locally-led approach to conservation. It offers new opportunities for USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to harness innovation, welcome new partners to the conservation mission, and demonstrate the value and efficacy of voluntary, private lands conservation.

In 2016, NRCS is investing up to $220 million in 84 high-impact projects that impact every state in the nation, including two in Maine. This investment, which builds on the $370 million invested for 2014 and 2015, will help conservation partners and agricultural producers conserve natural resources, leading to cleaner and more abundant water, healthier soil, enhanced wildlife habitat and many other benefits.

Maine Mountain Collaboration for Fish and Wildlife

Proposed NRCS Investment: $4.6 million (National)
Lead Partner: The Trust for Public Land
Number of Partners: 7
Participating State(s): Maine

This project will help improve inadequate fish and wildlife habitat, particularly for listed species, and biodiversity in the mountains of western Maine, a nationally significant forested mountain corridor along the spine of the Appalachians recognized for its importance in climate adaptation. The project will be regional in scope but will pilot the approach in a smaller, priority geography with plans to replicate successes across the landscape in the future. The project involves three principal activities: 1) purchasing conservation easements, including permanently protecting 9,350 acres of high priority conservation lands (gaps in lands which are already conserved). Thirty year conservation easements on surrounding lands will also be purchased; 2) engaging more small and medium sized private landowners in active management for wildlife; and 3) enhancing conditions for upstream passage of aquatic organisms on surrounding lands.

The Young Forest Initiative for At-Risk Species

Proposed NRCS Investment: $5.2 million (National)
Lead Partner: Wildlife Management Institute
Number of Partners: 12
Participating State(s): Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire **(lead state),** New York, Rhode Island & Vermont

This project will help increase technical and financial assistance to non-industrial private forestland owners who implement practices outlined in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program that result in an increase in the quantity and quality of young forest habitats. This support is critical, since young forest habitat is necessary to meet the critical needs of several recognized at-risk species.

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