



United States Department of Agriculture

## Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

### Investing in New Jersey - 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 one in New Jersey. 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.

### Raritan Basin Partners for Source Water Protection

Proposed NRCS Investment: \$700,000 (State)

Lead Partner: New Jersey Water Supply Authority (NJWSA)

Number of Partners: 3

Participating State(s): New Jersey

The South Branch Raritan River and Lockatong and Wickecheoke Creek Watersheds in New Jersey are important to water supply and have documented water quality impairments and restoration recommendations. Partners will implement conservation practices and easements in these watersheds that benefit water quality and soil health. Project objectives include: 1) reducing nutrient, sediment and bacteria loads from agricultural properties by installing conservation practices on 10-15 farms; 2) improving soil health and preventing soil erosion on agricultural properties through use of appropriate conservation practices such as cover crops and nutrient management; 3) increasing the amount of conservation practice implementation in the target watersheds by offering additional cost-share, up to 100%, via NJWSA's source water protection fund; 4) establishing easements on 1-2 agricultural properties to ensure they will remain in agricultural production; 5) documenting the pollutant load reductions and/or pollutant loads avoided through the implementation of conservation practices and preservation; and 6) evaluating the impact of offering incentives on conservation practice implementation.



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