



## Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

### Investing in South Dakota - 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 three in South Dakota. This investment, which builds on the \$370 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.

### Honey Bee and Monarch Butterfly Partnership

Proposed NRCS Investment: \$8.3 million (CCA)

Lead Partner: Pheasants Forever, Inc.

Number of Partners: 5

Participating State(s): Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska (**lead state**), North Dakota & South Dakota

Project partners will implement 2,900 EQIP projects on 14,500-acres within the Prairie Grasslands Critical Conservation Areas of Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota and will address inadequate habitat for fish and wildlife natural resource concerns to improve habitat conditions for honey bees and monarch butterflies. Those concerns will be addressed by working to establish high quality habitat projects with landowners on croplands in the area using innovative strategies that directly connect beekeepers, landowners, honey bees, monarch butterflies and high quality habitat.

### Innovative Tribal Conservation and Greenhouse Gas Management

Proposed NRCS Investment: \$1.8 million (National)

Lead Partner: Intertribal Agriculture Council

Number of Partners: 9

Participating State(s): Alaska, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma & South Dakota (**lead state**)

As the impacts of climate change become more pronounced in Indian country, Native nations and Indian landowners are faced with the challenge of implementing resource conservation land management systems that incorporate greenhouse gas management activities, also known as carbon farming practices. As greenhouse gas management services gain value in environmental markets, it is vital that historically underserved tribal conservation programs and American Indian farmers and ranchers develop conservation projects that demonstrate causal relationships between soil quality and ecosystem production functions such as carbon sequestration. This project will address the need for conservation stewardship projects on American Indian lands that integrate a carbon farming production possibilities frontier component. The project area will be national in scope covering a diversity of tribal rangeland landscape types including Southwest Alaska, prairie grassland and Colorado River Basin regions. The project includes developing and implementing soil amendment, forestry and grazing management Conservation Activity Plans (CAP) and Conservation Stewardship Plans (CSP) on pilot project sites. The CAP/CSPs will establish a framework for inventorying the existing baseline carbon sequestration rate and propose cost-effective conservation practices to achieve multiple environmental quality and economic development goals. One of the



anticipated outcomes from this project will be the development of carbon offsets from soil amendment and grazing land and livestock management activities. We will engage private investment in those pilot project sites that both meet investors and credit buyers' interest in charismatic high-quality carbon offsets, and tribes' interest in promoting appropriate conservation practices and economic development on Indian lands.

## Lewis & Clark/Lower James River Water Quality Project

Proposed NRCS Investment: \$2.7 million (State)

Lead Partner: James River Water Development District

Number of Partners: 7

Participating State(s): South Dakota

This project will assist land owners and producers with saline and sodic problem soils; improving water quality by avoiding, controlling and trapping nutrient and sediment runoff; reducing agricultural non-point source pollution; improving grassland and riparian area conditions and improving soil health and wildlife habitat within the watersheds. The South Dakota Department of Environment will develop a monitoring program for the project to assess current river and watershed conditions and gauge the impacts of past and planned conservation practices.

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