



**Natural Resources
Conservation Service**

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News Release

Release No.: 000010.16

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NRCS to Help Farmers Measure Conservation Impacts on Water Quality

Funding Available for Producers in Nine States

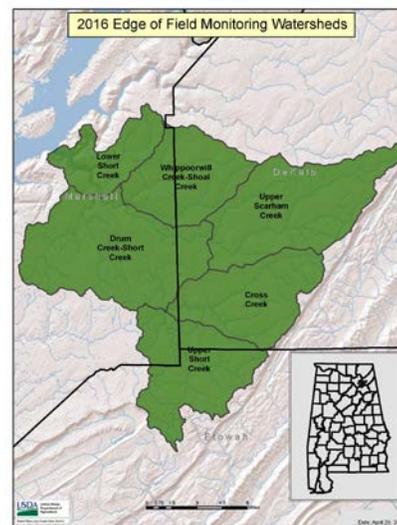
AUBURN, April 29, 2016 –The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has announced the availability of \$2 million to help farmers install edge-of-field stations that monitor water quality as it leaves their fields, providing data to evaluate the success of various conservation efforts. The funding is available to farmers located across key watersheds in nine states and is part of USDA’s ongoing commitment to measure the effectiveness of a wide range of conservation initiatives.

“Testing the quality of water as it leaves a field helps farmers and USDA understand which conservation practices work best at preventing sediment and nutrient runoff. Verifiable data gives farmers, USDA and other partners’ information needed to make targeted conservation investments to improve water quality for everyone,” said USDA’s Deputy Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment Ann Mills.

Mills announced funding for this effort, led by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), in St. Louis at a meeting of the Mississippi River/Gulf of Mexico Hypoxia Task Force.

This year, NRCS is offering edge-of-field funding in watersheds in Alabama, Arkansas, Iowa, Michigan, Missouri, New York, Vermont and Washington.

Under the [National Water Quality Initiative \(NWQI\)](#), six watersheds are eligible for edge-of-field monitoring in Alabama. They each run into Guntersville Lake which feeds a public water supply. The watersheds include: Lower Short Creek, Whipporwill Creek-Shoal Creek, Upper Scarham Creek, Drum Creek-Short Creek, Cross Creek and Upper Short Creek.



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Financial assistance is available through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to install and maintain the monitoring systems for up to nine years, giving time to measure the impact of conservation systems on water quality under different conditions.

The program was launched in 2013 and has led to the installation of stations on private lands in nine states including Arkansas, Indiana, Mississippi, Missouri, New York, Ohio, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin. Farmers are already using edge-of-field monitoring data to adjust their strategies to improve the quality of water, soil and other natural resources within their operations. In the longer term, data collected from many sources will help producers make the most informed conservation investments possible and document how edge-of-field monitoring of conservation work benefits the public and communities.

For more information, visit the [Edge-of-Field Monitoring webpage](#) and your [local USDA Service Center](#).

Throughout the Obama Administration, USDA has generated thousands of critical partnerships to conserve and protect our natural resources on working landscapes, while enrolling a record number of acres in conservation programs. Seventy-percent of the nation's land is owned and tended to privately, and America's farmers, ranchers and landowners have willingly stepped up to address the growing impacts of a changing climate. With USDA's support, they work to implement voluntary practices that improve air and water quality, prevent soil erosion and create and protect wildlife habitat.

Since 2009, USDA has invested more than \$29 billion to help producers make conservation improvements, working with as many as 500,000 farmers, ranchers and landowners to protect land and water on over 400 million acres nationwide. For an interactive look at USDA's work in conservation and forestry over the course of this Administration, visit <https://medium.com/usda-results>.

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