

USDA Regional Conservation Partnership Program

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) encourages partners to join in efforts with producers to increase the restoration and sustainable use of soil, water, wildlife and related natural resources on regional or watershed scales.

RCPP is not a grant program. Through RCPP, NRCS works with partners to provide a combination of financial and technical assistance to help producers implement conservation practices.

RCPP partners develop project applications to address specific natural resource objectives in a proposed area or region. Partnering organizations design, promote, implement, and evaluate the project outcomes.

NRCS will select final RCPP projects following a two-phase application process that includes: (1) a pre-proposal application; and (2) a full proposal application.

NRCS will assess and evaluate RCPP project applications against four criteria—solutions, contributions, innovation, and participation.

- **Participation:** Successful partnerships will bring a diverse array of stakeholders into a project, greatly accelerate adoption of conservation systems in the project area, and engage participants including historically underserved audiences.
- **Innovation:** Partnerships will be innovative in their approach, and successful proposals will utilize one or more program authorities (EQIP, CSP, HFRP, or ACEP) to address natural resource management concerns.
- **Contribution:** Successful partnerships will bring an array of financial and technical interests and capabilities to projects, such as cash contributions and technical professionals to work one-on-one with farmers and ranchers to provide planning, management and engineering activities. NRCS' goal is to leverage funds to double the federal conservation investment with partner contributions.
- **Solutions:** Successful partnerships will design lasting solutions that are technically sound and locally supported so that benefits will extend beyond the Federal investment.

RCPP federal assistance is delivered in accordance with the authorities of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), and Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP), and in certain geographic areas, the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention program.

USDA RCPP Funding

NATURAL RESOURCE CONCERNS:

A RCPP project must address at least one of the resource concerns listed below.

- Excess/Insufficient Water/Drought
- Water quality degradation
- Soil quality degradation
- Inadequate habitat for fish and wildlife (and invertebrates)
- Air quality impacts
- Degraded Plant Condition (specific to certain CCA only)
- Energy
- Climate Change

LAND ELIGIBILITY:

The following private and Tribal lands are eligible for enrollment:

- Cropland
- Grassland
- Rangeland
- Pastureland
- Nonindustrial private forest land
- Other land incidental to agricultural production (including wetlands and riparian buffers) on which significant natural resource issues could be addressed under the program.

Public lands are eligible in EQIP under limited circumstances where an eligible producer has authority to operate on the public land (e.g., a grazing permit) for the length of the program contract.

TIMELINE:

- January 2018 – Announcement for Program Funding
- April 2018 – Pre-proposals due
- September 2018 – Full proposals due from applicants selected
- December 2018 – Announcement of full proposals selected for FY2019 Funding

POTENTIAL CONSERVATION PRACTICES/PROJECTS FOR THE PROGRAM:

- Stream Protection (cattle exclusion, watering stations, etc.)
- Soil Improvement (education and outreach, demonstration, etc.)
- Buffer Restoration and Conservation Easements
- Field Borders including cover drops to improve soil structure
- Stream Stabilization
- Minor tributary Grade Controls to stop headcutting
- Outreach and Education

POTENTIAL PARTNERS LIST:

- Agroforestry Department at MU
- Missouri Department of Conservation
- Fish & Wildlife Service
- Greenbelt Trust
- 3M
- Columbia Public Schools
- Boone Hospital
- Boone Electric Cooperative
- MFA
- Missouri Department of Transportation
- Central Electric
- Missouri Prairie Foundation – Go Native!
- Quail Forever
- Columbia Environmental Research Center – USGS
- MU AL Gustin Golf Course
- City of Columbia Parks & Recreation
- City of Columbia Utilities – Water & Electric
- Audubon Society
- NRCS
- Bass Pro
- Farm Bureau
- Walmart
- Lowes
- Home Depot