



NACD has secured a \$10 million cooperative agreement with NRCS to further build and enhance conservation district technical assistance across the nation.

## **The Basics:**

The agreement was approved September 25, 2017. We will still be finalizing details of a plan of work and timeline. We anticipate a significant portion of the funds will be utilized in a direct manner to enable conservation districts to staff up in areas where additional capacity will further improve customer service and reduce workload pressures to deliver conservation assistance.

This agreement includes:

- \$9 million for conservation planning and EQIP implementation assistance (80% EQIP & 20% CTA)
- \$1 million for NACD to manage the project (over a two-year plus period)
- A 25% match will be required for each agreement. For example, a \$50k contract would require a \$13k match. Match is preferably cash, but can be in-kind. NACD is required overall to have a 25% match. Most contracts would cover funding for a 1-year period.

NACD will ask state/territory conservation partnerships to identify high-priority locations for the use of these funds; and seek first-come, first-served requests. NACD's priority is to get the \$9 million in the hands of conservation districts in the first and second quarter of Fiscal Year 2018 (FY18) so that they can hire employees to help carry out the objectives of this agreement. Funding assumptions are that this \$9 million would hire about 180 Full-Time Equivalents (FTE's). Some will likely be part-time and/or multi-district.

NACD plans for some contractor assistance for region representatives and to provide additional capacity and assistance in coordination/communication with state partners.

## **Initial Implementation Steps:**

- August 29, alert NACD board
- September 11 and 27, brief all NACD staff via teleconferences
- September 28, distribute briefing materials and project FAQs
- October 4, national teleconference held with NACD Board/Staff, State/Territory Contacts
- State/territory partnerships begin engaging in determining workload priorities and conservation district participants, regional teleconferences scheduled
- In October, add contractor capacity for NACD
- Secure final approval on plan of work, timeline, and reporting metrics
- Prepare announcement for the project; distribute to all state/territory partners, target date Nov. 1
- Goal is to have all funds (\$9m) transferred to conservation districts and engaged in hiring by March 31, 2018