

Resource Conservation Partnership Program

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Regional Conservation Partnership Program



June 2014

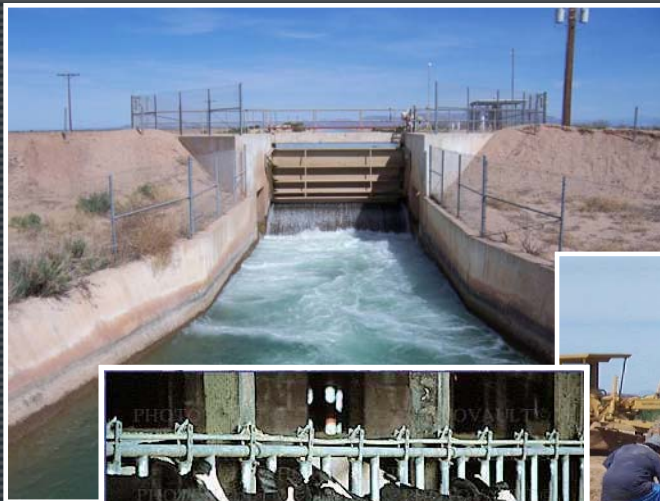


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Regional Conservation Partnership Program



Regional Conservation Partnership Program is a new program that mobilizes partnerships to multiply investments and reach common conservation goals.



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A new 2014 Farm Bill conservation program that:

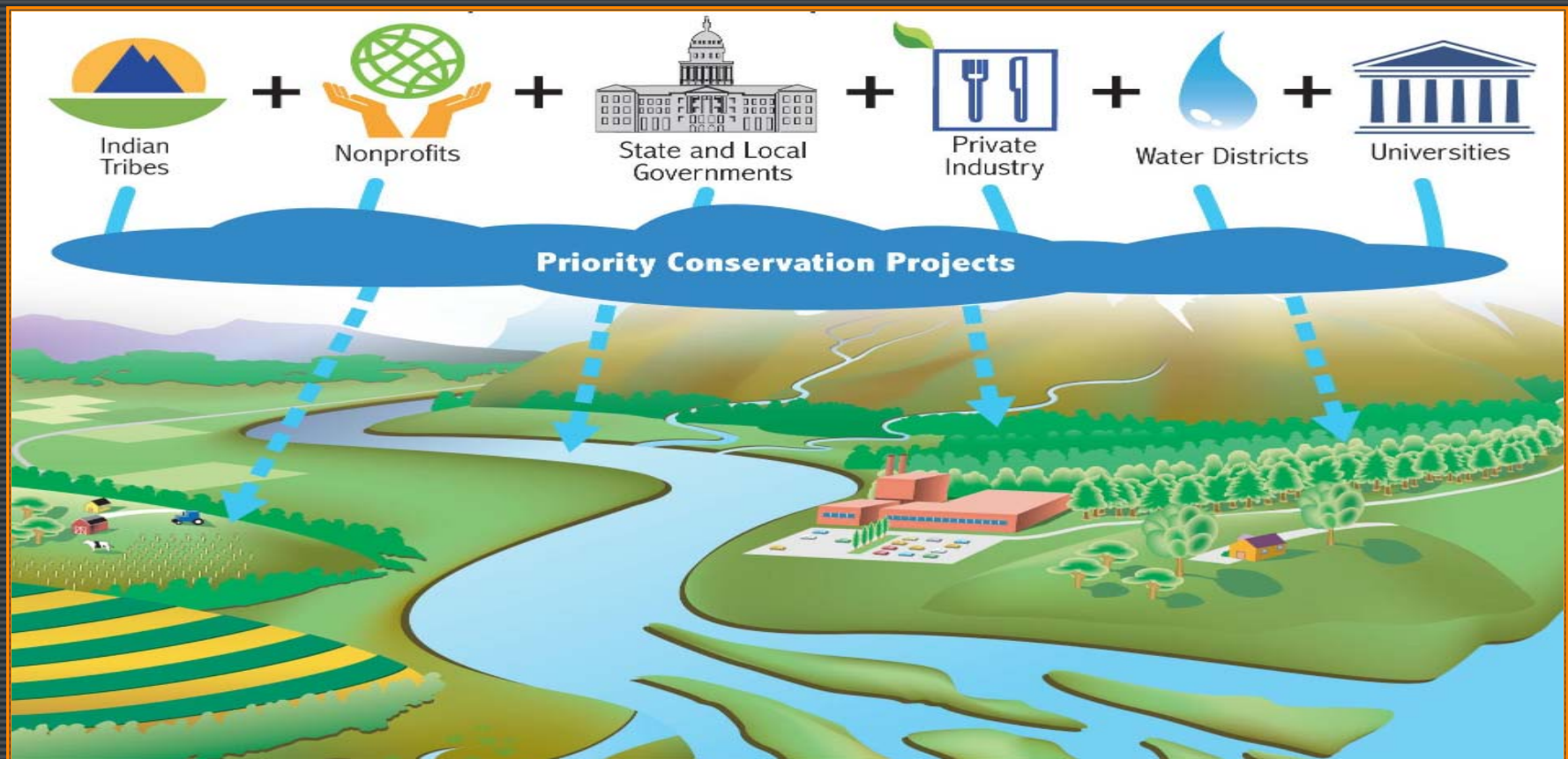
- Furthers the conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of soil, water, wildlife on a regional scale
- Encourages partners to cooperate with producers
- Provides assistance through:
 - Partnership agreements
 - Program contracts or easement agreements
- Combines the purposes and functions of four previous regional programs:
 - AWEPP, CBWP, CCPI, Great Lakes Program
- Utilizes one new and three existing programs:
 - ACEP(new), EQIP, CSP, HFRP



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- **More Partners** bring innovation, new ideas, resources and local expertise to solve problems

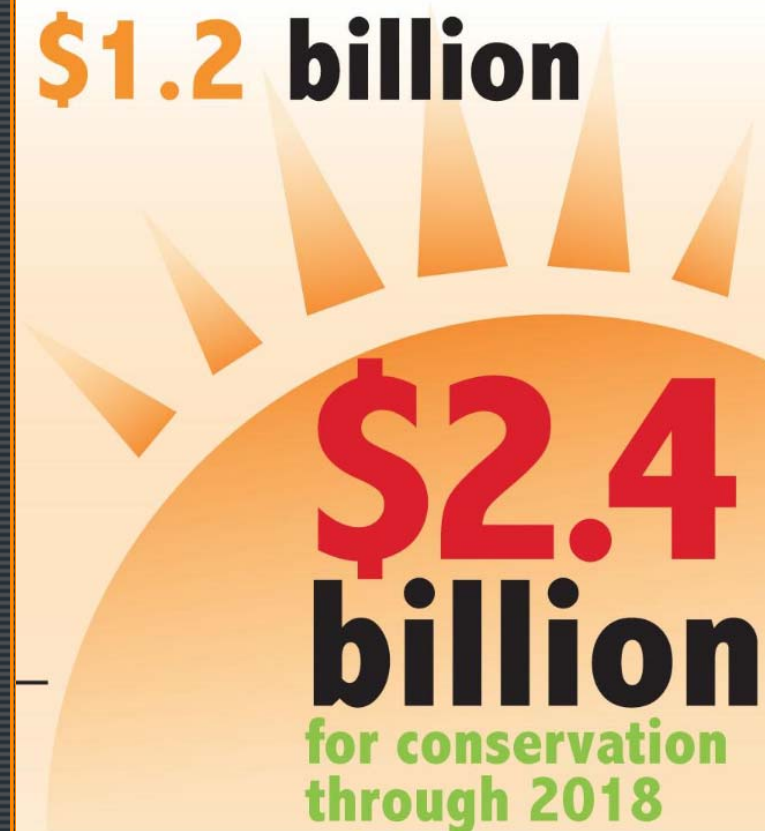


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Receives funding:

- \$100 million each year directly from the Farm Bill
- Also, by reserving 7% of funds from the four covered programs annually
- Over five years, USDA plans to invest up to \$1.2 billion with partners matching funding that could be as much as \$2.4 billion for conservation



\$1.2 billion

\$2.4 billion
for conservation
through 2018

The infographic features a stylized sun with rays in shades of orange and yellow. The text is overlaid on the sun, with the top amount in orange and the bottom amount in red and black. The bottom amount is also in green.

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Allocates funding by:

- 40% for projects based on a national competitive process
- 25% for a state competitive process administered by STC's
- 35% for projects in critical conservation areas

40% National
(multi-state projects)



25% State
(state projects)



35% Critical Conservation Areas
(areas designated by Secretary)



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Allows the Secretary to establish Critical Conservation Areas:

- Up to 8 areas
- Give priority to areas:
 - With significant agricultural production
 - Benefiting from water quality or quantity improvement
 - Containing landowners and producers that need to meet or avoid negatively impacting regulations

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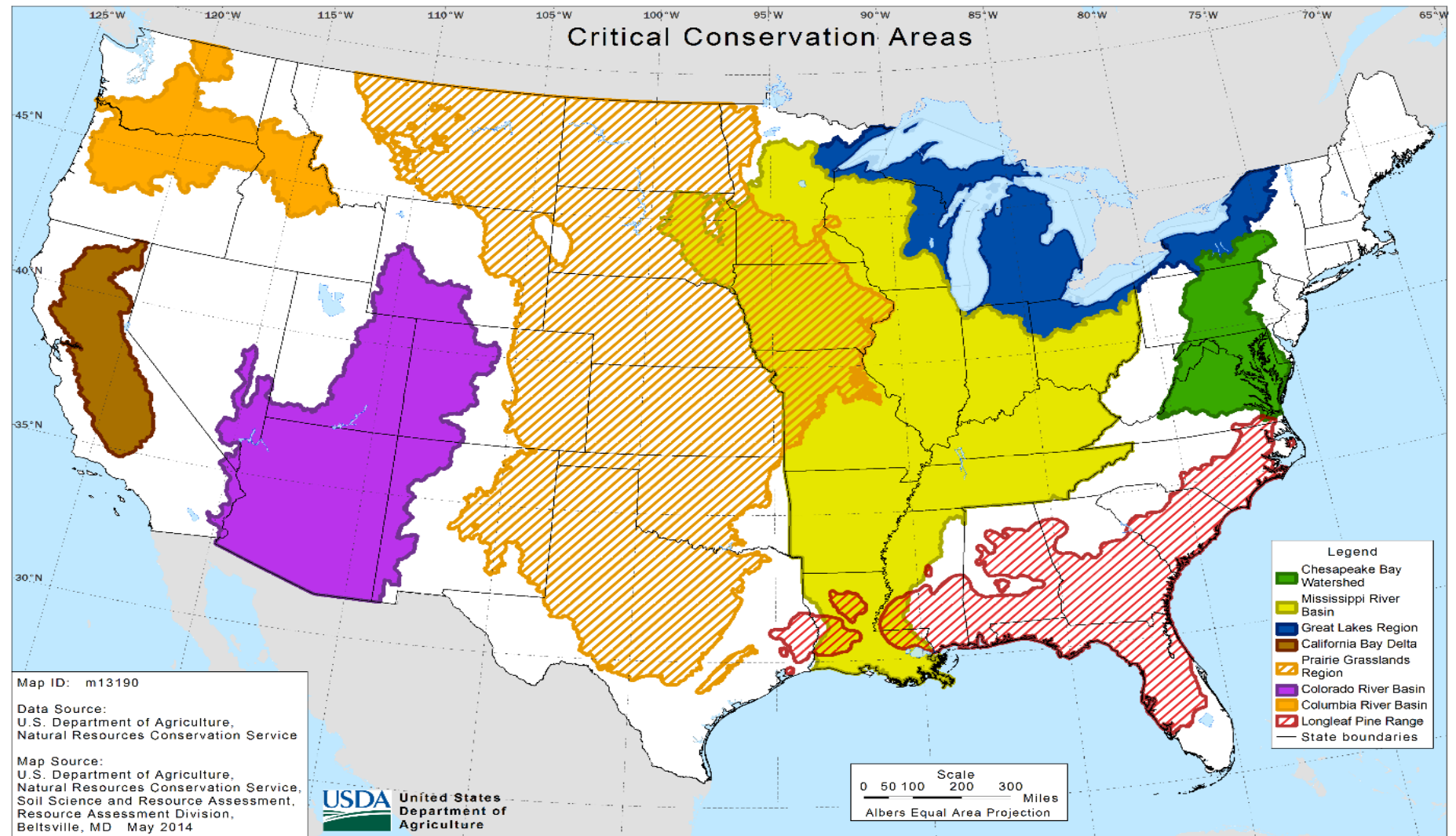
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Critical Conservation Areas

1. Great Lakes Region (IL, IN, MI, MN, NY, PA, OH, WI)
2. Chesapeake Bay Watershed (DE, MD, NY, PA, VA, WV)
3. Mississippi River Basin (AR, KY, IA, IL, IN, LA, MN, **MO**, MS, OH, SD, TN, WI)
4. Longleaf Pine Range (AL, FL, GA, LA, MS, NC, SC, TX, VA)
5. Columbia River Basin (ID, OR, WA)
6. California Bay Delta (CA)
7. Prairie Grasslands Region (CO, KS, IA, **MO**, MN, MT, ND, NE, NM, SD, TX, WY)
8. Colorado River Basin (AZ, CA, CO, NM, NV, UT, WY)

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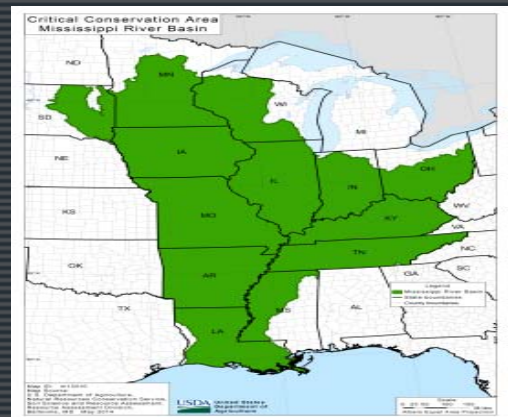
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Mississippi River Basin CCA

Resource Concern Priorities

- **Water Quality Degradation:** Excess nutrients and pesticides in surface and ground waters; excessive sediment in surface waters
- **Insufficient Water:** Inefficient use of irrigation water (associated with Water Quality Degradation)
- **Inadequate Habitat for Fish and Wildlife:** Habitat degradation



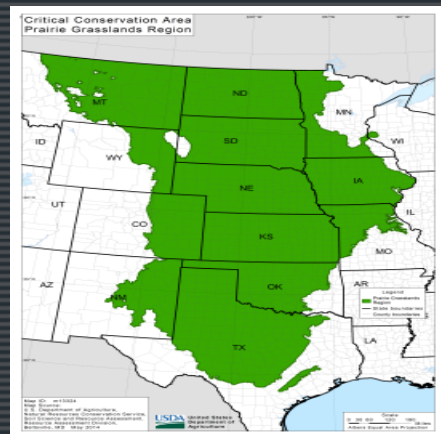
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Prairie Grasslands Region CCA

Resource Concern Priorities:

- **Inadequate Habitat for Fish and Wildlife:** Habitat degradation
- **Insufficient Water:** Inefficient use of irrigation water
- **Excess Water:** Runoff, flooding or ponding
- **Degraded Plant Condition:** Excessive plant pest pressure

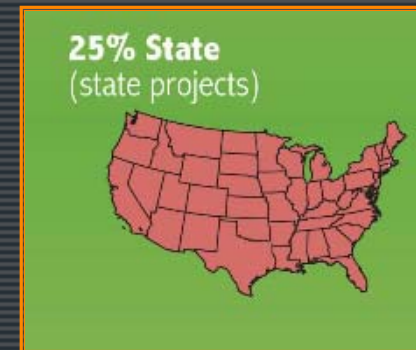


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Priority Resource Concerns for Missouri

- Water Quality Degradation (Water Quality)
 - Excessive Sediment in Surface Water
 - Nutrients in Ground and Surface Water
 - Pesticides in Ground and Surface Water
- Soil Quality Degradation (Soil Health)
 - Organic Matter Depletion
- Insufficient Water (Water Quantity)
 - Inefficient Use of Irrigation Water
- Soil Erosion (Soil Health)
 - Concentrated Flow Erosion
- Inadequate Habitat for Fish and Wildlife (At Risk Species)
 - Habitat Degradation
- Degraded Plant Condition (Forest Health)
 - Undesirable Plant Productivity and Health
 - Excessive Plant Pest Pressure
 - Inadequate Structure and Composition



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Encourages Partnership Agreements:

- NRCS will conduct a competitive process to select applications for partnership agreements
- NRCS will make public the criteria used in evaluating



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NRCS is now accepting proposals for RCPP

- The announcement for program funding can be found on grants.gov. More information on the APF and the program can be found at nrcs.usda.gov



The screenshot shows the Grants.gov website interface. At the top, there are navigation links: CONTACT US, MANAGE SUBSCRIPTIONS, REGISTER, and LOGIN. A search bar is present with a dropdown menu set to 'Grant Opportunities' and a 'GO' button. Below the search bar is a navigation menu with options: HOME, ABOUT, SEARCH GRANTS (highlighted), APPLICANTS, GRANTORS, SYSTEM-TO-SYSTEM, FORMS, OUTREACH, and SUPPORT. The main content area is titled 'SEARCH GRANTS' and includes a 'BASIC SEARCH CRITERIA' section with input fields for 'Keyword(s)', 'Funding Opp #', and 'CFDA Number', along with a 'SEARCH' button. Below this is an 'OPPORTUNITY STATUS' section with checkboxes for 'Open (50)' and 'Closed (47)'. A filter bar shows 'AGENCY: [X] All Department of Agriculture'. The 'SORT BY' dropdown is set to 'Open Date (Descending)' and the 'DATE RANGE' is 'All Available'. The search results section shows '1 - 25 OF 50 MATCHING RESULTS' and a table with the following data:

Funding Opportunity #	Opportunity Title	Agency	Open Date	Close Date
USDA-NRCS-NHQ-RCPP-14-01	Regional Conservation Partnership Program	Natural Resources Conservation Service	05/27/2014	07/14/2014

- Pre-proposals are due July 14, and full proposals are due September 26

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Eligible lands and partners for RCPP

- Eligible land includes:
 - cropland, grassland, rangeland, pastureland, nonindustrial forest land, other land incidental to agricultural production (wetlands, buffers etc.)
- Eligible partners may include:
 - agricultural producer associations, silvicultural producer associations, groups of producers, State or unit of local governments, Indian tribes, farmer cooperatives, water district, irrigation district, rural water districts, municipal water or wastewater treatment entities, conservation driven nongovernmental organizations, institutions of higher education

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NRCS may give higher priority to proposals that:

- Deliver high percentages of applied conservation to address conservation priorities or local, State, regional, or national conservation initiatives
- Significantly leverage non-Federal financial and technical resources and coordinate with other local, State, regional, or national efforts
- Provide innovation in conservation methods and delivery
- Assist producers in meeting or avoiding the need for a natural resource regulatory requirement

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Examples of eligible conservation activities include:

- Water quality restoration or enhancement projects, including nutrient management and sediment reduction
- Water quality conservation, restoration or enhancement projects relating to surface water groundwater resources including;
 - the conversion of irrigated cropland to the production of less water-intensive commodities, dry land farming
 - irrigation system improvement
- Drought mitigation
- Flood prevention

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Examples of eligible conservation activities include:

- Water retention
- Air Quality improvement
- Habitat conservation, restoration, and enhancement
- Erosion control and sediment reduction
- Forest restoration
- Easement acquisition activities associated with wetland restoration and protection or the preservation of working agricultural lands.

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Partnership Agreements:

- **Partnership agreements may not exceed 5 years;** however, NRCS may extend the agreement 1 time for up to 12 months
- The partnership agreement defines the scope of the project, including:
 - Eligible activities to be implemented
 - Potential agricultural or nonindustrial private forest operation affected
 - Local, State, multi-State or other geographic area covered
 - Planning, outreach, implementation and assessment to be conducted

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Partners are responsible for:

- Contributing a significant portion of the overall costs
- Providing outreach and education to eligible producers for potential participation in the project
- Acting on a landowner's or producer's behalf, if requested by the landowners or producer in applying for assistance
- Leveraging financial or technical assistance provided by NRCS with additional funds to help achieve the project objectives
- Conducting and providing an assessment of the project costs and conservation effects

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Additional Program Provisions

- Allows the Secretary to waive AGI if needed to fulfill purposes of the program
- Allows adjustments to discretionary rules of covered program with Secretary's approval, if requested by partner
- No funding may be used to cover partner administrative costs

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Questions and Comments



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Non-Discrimination Statement

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