

Plan of Operations for the Trout Unlimited Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Project in Wisconsin (Driftless Area Habitat for the Wild and Rare)

Through RCPP, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) offers financial assistance to agricultural producers to implement on-farm conservation practices. Eligible land is determined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and is based on an identified resource concern. Eligible producers may apply for financial assistance on conservation practices that will address the identified resource concerns in the project area.

Eligible Project Area: Producers located within the Driftless Area Habitat for the Wild and Rare project area are eligible to participate in the project’s EQIP sign-up. The conservation practice(s) identified in the application must be located within the project area to be eligible for financial assistance consideration through the RCPP-EQIP sign-up.

Eligible Practices and Payment Rates: Listed below are the practices eligible for the project. Practice [payment rates](#) can be viewed on the WI NRCS EQIP web site.

326	Clearing and Snagging
342	Critical Area Planting
327	Conservation Cover ¹
382	Fence
386	Field Border
393	Filter Strip
395	Stream Habitat Improvement and Management (395)
484	Mulching
500	Obstruction Removal
560	Access Road (if necessary to facilitate practice installation)
572	Spoil Spreading ¹
578	Stream Crossing
580	Streambank and Shoreline Protection
587	Structure for Water Control ¹
620	Underground Outlet ¹
657	Wetland Restoration
649	Structures for Wildlife

¹Supporting practices for Wetland Restoration (657)

Eligible Land Uses: Riparian areas of trout streams* in the following land uses are potentially eligible:

- Crop
- Pasture
- Forest
- Associated Ag Land

*Defined by [WDNR Trout Stream Classification](#) (Class 1, 2, or 3 streams)

Eligible Resource Concerns:

Fish and Wildlife Habitat

- Inadequate Habitat- Cover/Shelter
- Inadequate Habitat- Habitat Continuity (Space)

Water Quality Degradation

- Excessive Sediment in Surface Water

Eligibility for Stream Habitat Improvement and Management (395) will be determined using the Wisconsin Stream Habitat Suitability Index (HSI).

Application Period: Applications may be taken at any time and those received by September 2, 2016 will be evaluated for funding consideration.

Interested applicants may apply in person at the local USDA Service Center. Applicants may also request EQIP assistance by telephone, FAX, e-mail, or letter. Applicants may locate their local office using this link:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/wi/contact/local/>

Funding Pools: Applications will be placed in the Trout Unlimited RCPP Driftless Area Habitat for the Wild and Rare fund pool.

Screening: All applications will be screened using the EQIP Application Screening Tool posted on the WI NRCS web site and assigned a High, Medium, or Low priority based on their screening status as of September 2, 2016.

Ranking: Ranking of the applications will be done according to the ranking system posted on the WI NRCS web site for the Trout Unlimited RCPP-EQIP. High priority applications will be ranked first, followed by Medium priority, if funding allows. Low priority applications will not be ranked. All rankings will be conducted in ProTracts. In the event of application ranking score ties, the application that has the higher tracking code (i.e. random number generated in ProTracts) will receive funding priority.

Existing national and state EQIP-General ranking questions will be used. Local EQIP questions (250 total points) are as follows:

1. The project site is located on stream identified by the WI Department of Natural Resources as a (choose only one, if applicable):
 - a. Class 2 trout stream **80 points**
 - b. Class 1 trout stream **65 points**
2. A perpetual public easement is already established on the project site. **80 points**
3. Application includes instream or riparian habitat practices to benefit non-game species (choose only one, if applicable):

- a. Wetland Restoration (657) **90 points**
- b. Stream Habitat Improvement and Management (395) for root wad,
log deflector, or basking log. **70 points**
- c. Structures for Wildlife (649) **60 points**

Funding: Available EQIP funds will be allocated based on the numerical ranking system set forth on the web site. All ranking will be conducted in ProTracts. If insufficient funds are available to fund all eligible applicants, applications will be held and may be funded with extra EQIP funds received later during the fiscal year, or deferred to the next ranking period.