

# Regional Conservation Partnership Program

Investing in Florida



## Regional Conservation Partnership Program

Created by the 2014 Farm Bill, the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) is a partner-driven, locally-led approach to conservation. It offers new opportunities for USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to harness innovation, welcome new partners to the conservation mission, and demonstrates the value and efficacy of voluntary, private lands conservation.

In 2017, NRCS is investing up to \$225 million in 88 projects that impact nearly every state in the nation, including three in Florida. Since 2014, NRCS has invested more than \$825 million in 286 high-impact projects, bringing together more than 2,000 conservation partners who have invested an additional \$1.4 billion. By 2018, NRCS and partners will have invested at least \$2.4 billion. These projects are leading to cleaner and more abundant water, better soil and air quality, enhance wildlife habitat, more resilient and productive agricultural lands and stronger rural economies.

**Florida Projects to Date**

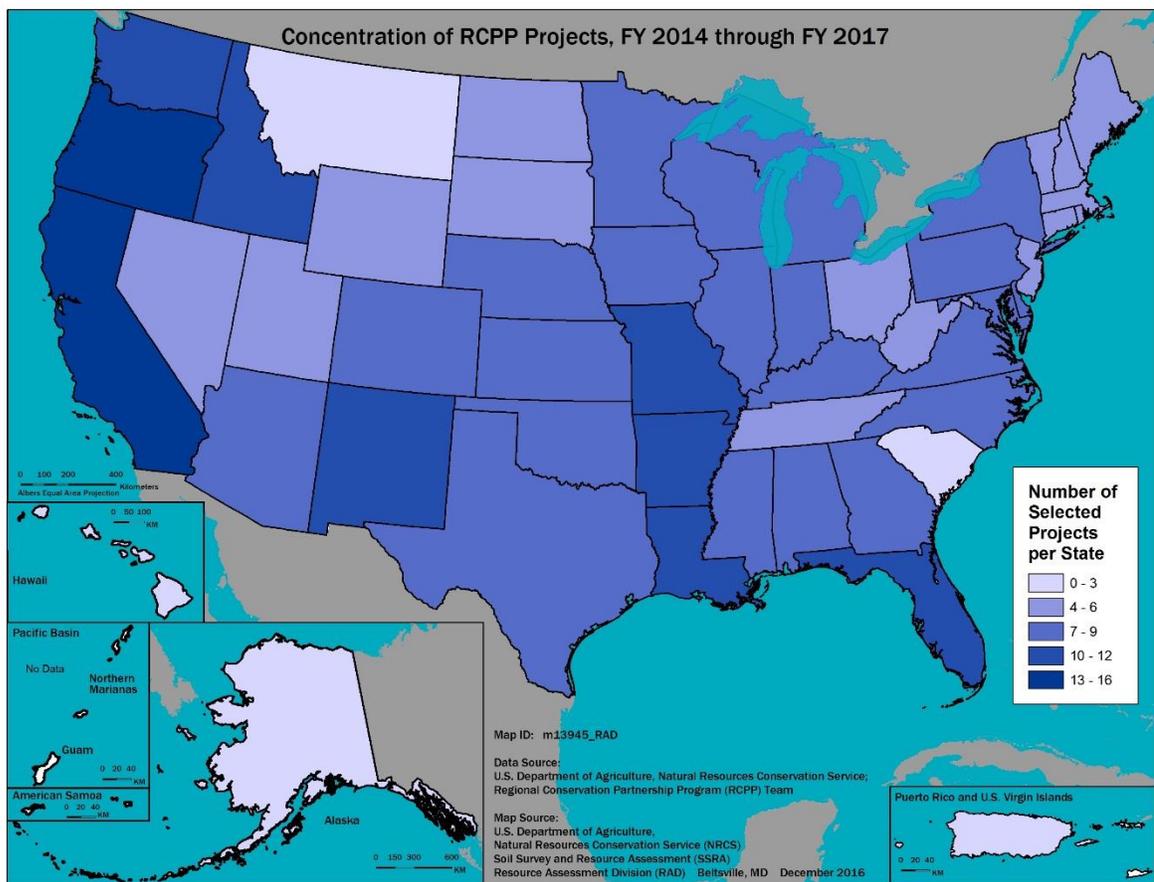
**Projects by Resource Concern**

Resource Concern	Number of Projects
Wildlife Habitat	6
Water Quantity/Drought	3
Climate Change	1

**10**  
Projects

**\$36.4**  
million  
NRCS Investment

**124**  
Partners



## Existing RCPP Projects

Year	Title	Funding Pool	Lead Partner	Number of Partners	NRCS Investment
2016	Everglades Headwaters Longleaf Pine	CCA	The Nature Conservancy - Florida	5	\$3.7 million
2016	Training Florida's Natural Resource Managers	State	Florida Forest Service	4	\$1 million
2016	Working Lands for Florida Panther Conservation	State	Florida Fish & Wildlife Cons. Comm.	8	\$630,000
2014/2015	Coastal Headwaters Forest – Longleaf Conservation and Restoration	CCA	The Conservation Fund	4	\$5 million
2014/2015	Securing Private Working Forests to Benefit Longleaf Pine, Threatened and Endangered Species, and Military Readiness	CCA	U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities	16	\$12 million
2014/2015	Regional Partnership for Conservation of Gopher Tortoise and At-Risk Species Habitat in Florida	State	Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission	6	\$1.5 million
2014/2015	Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint Rivers (ACFR) Conservation Partnership for Alabama, Florida, and Georgia	National	Flint River soil and Water Conservation District	32	\$4 million

## 2017 RCPP Projects

### Innovative Financing for Watershed Protection

Proposed NRCS Investment: \$2,555,000 (National)

Lead Partner: U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities

Number of Initial Partners: 4

Participating States: Florida (Lead State)

By developing two case studies, the Innovative Financing for Watershed Protection project will encourage water utilities to fund land conservation and restoration that simultaneously protects water supplies and benefits at-risk species and other natural resources. An existing, premiere case study focused on a Natural Resources Conservation Service/Endowment partnership led Raleigh, N.C., to establish a watershed protection fee that generates \$2.25 million annually for watershed projects. For this project, the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities and partners will examine the protection of a large, underserved landowner-owned farm important for water quality and that connects a matrix of other lands protected for wildlife in Savannah River Basin. The partners also will field test a potential break-through, market approach that could help landowners generate income from selling water by restoring more natural forests that benefit at-risk species and longleaf ecosystems.



## Gulf of Mexico - Forest to Sea Project

Proposed NRCS Investment: \$3,000,000 (National)

Lead Partner: The Conservation Fund

Number of Initial Partners: 13

Participating States: Florida (Lead State)

The Gulf of Mexico – Forest to Sea project will conserve Florida’s pristine “Big Bend” area along the northeastern Gulf by implementing innovative conservation/restoration solutions with private working forest owners. Using an impact investment approach, The Conservation Fund and 12 partners will implement an HFRP easement/restoration plan on large forested tracts to address the natural resource concerns of water quantity, water quality, inadequate habitat, air quality and climate change. The area faces a significant threat due to the conversion of upstream forests to more intensive uses and the resultant reduction in freshwater flows. This project will prevent conversion while allowing sustainable timber harvesting and maintaining local jobs. It will accelerate the pace of conservation and serve as a model for further conservation and impact investing in the region and beyond.

## Climate Resiliency in Florida, Alabama and Georgia

Proposed NRCS Investment: \$3,000,000 (National)

Lead Partner: Flint River Soil and Water Conservation District

Number of Initial Partners: 32

Participating States: Alabama, Florida and Georgia (Lead State)

The Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint River Basin stretches from the base of the Appalachian Mountains in North Georgia to the Gulf of Mexico in the Florida Panhandle. The vibrant ecological Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint River Basin and adjacent Ochlockonee River Basin provide habitat for a rich biodiversity of aquatic and terrestrial species, including many designated as endangered or threatened. Growers in this region provide food, fuel, forest products and fiber to global markets, and they depend upon the areas natural resources to sustain their livelihoods. Over the last few decades, fluctuations in climate patterns have presented challenges to sustainable management of the region’s natural resources. The Flint River Soil and Water Conservation District and over 30 multi-state partners will develop and implement practical solutions for climate change adaptation in the river basins.