

Regional Conservation Partnership Program

Investing in Illinois



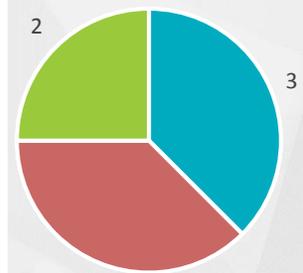
Regional Conservation Partnership Program

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 one in Illinois. 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.

Illinois Projects to Date

Projects by Resource Concern



- Soil Health
- Water Quality
- Wildlife Habitat

8

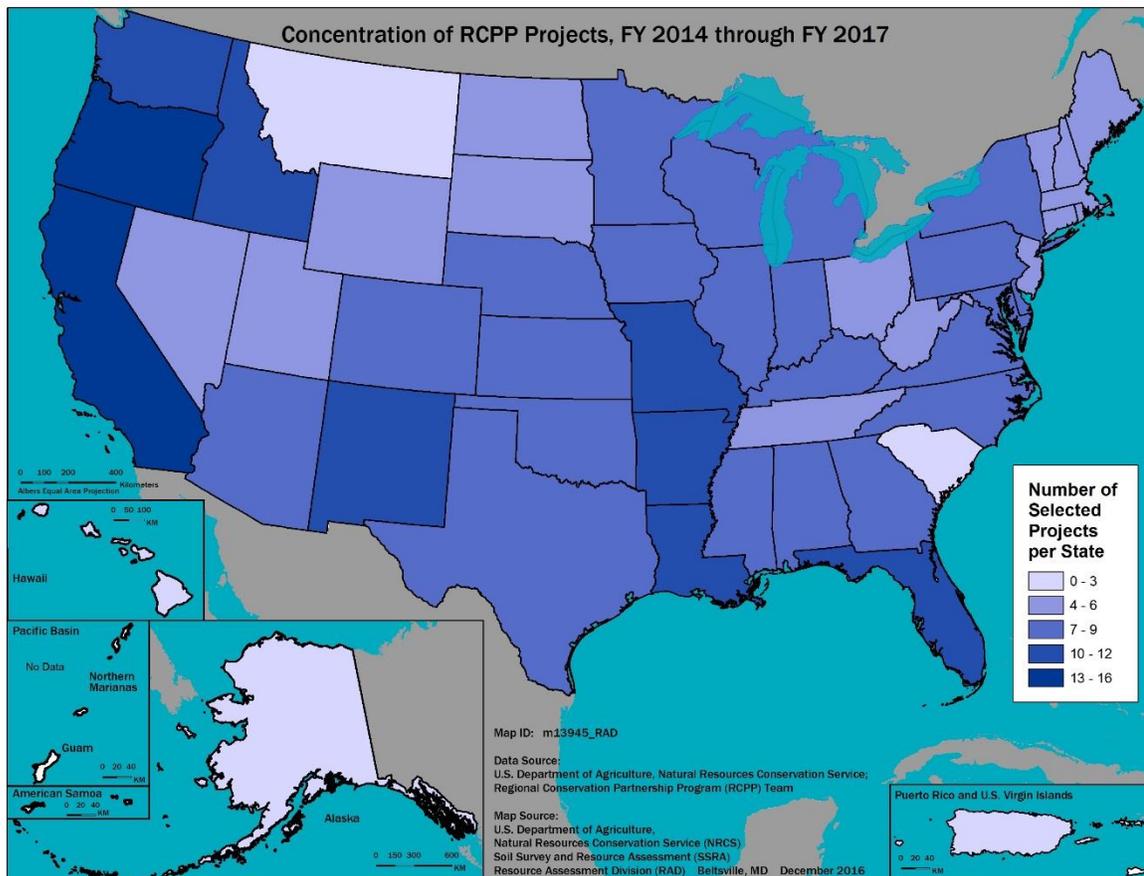
Projects

\$26.8 million

NRCS Investment

127

Partners



Existing RCPP Projects

Year	Title	Funding Pool	Lead Partner	Number of Partners	NRCS Investment
2016	Improving Oak - Hickory Forest Health in Illinois	State	Illinois Forestry Development Council	13	\$2.3 million
2016	Improving Working Lands for Monarch Butterflies	National	National Fish and Wildlife Foundation	12	\$6 million
2016	Midwest Agriculture Water Quality Partnership	National	Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship	40	\$9.5 million
2016	Precision Conservation Management	CCA	Illinois Corn Growers Association	30	\$5.3 million
2014/2015	Shorebird Conservation Acreage via Drainage Water Runoff Control	CCA	Department Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences	6	\$500,000
2014/2015	BMP Implementation for Nutrient and Sediment Loss Reduction in Macon County, Illinois	State	Macon County Soil and Water Conservation District	9	\$600,000
2014/2015	Conservation Cropping Systems For Improving Soil Health: Soil Health Assessment	State	Illinois Department of Agriculture- Bureau of Land and Water Resources	5	\$1.6 million

2017 RCPP Projects

Upper Macoupin Creek Watershed Partnership

Proposed NRCS Investment: \$1,000,000 (State)

Lead Partner: American Farmland Trust

Number of Initial Partners: 12

Participating States: Illinois (Lead State)

Illinois contributes 20% of the Nitrogen and 11% of the Phosphorus, yet only 7% of the water to the Gulf of Mexico through the Mississippi River. The Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy identifies the Macoupin Creek HUC 8 Watershed as one of the three highest P-yielding watersheds and outlines a voluntary approach to stemming nutrient loss through widespread adoption of agricultural conservation management practices. With little new funding, public-private partnerships will be critical for implementation, and such a partnership was recently formed in the Upper Macoupin Creek sub watershed. Ongoing activities include farmer and non-operator landowner outreach (field days, workshops and producer interviews), soil transect surveys and water quality monitoring, and enrollment of producers in state and federal cost share programs to implement conservation practices on agricultural and forested private lands. Through the new Upper Macoupin Creek Watershed Partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the American Trust and 11 partners will address a major barrier to practice implementation – the need for expensive new equipment – by offering reduced rate custom application with a new tillage tool, the “SoilWarrior”, allowing for strip tillage, nutrient placement and cover crop seeding all in one pass. The project will raise awareness of soil lost from un-managed forestlands by establishing a forest management demonstration site in partnership with Blackburn College, and be able to respond to requests from a traditionally underserved community in the watershed to help them with sedimentation issues.

