

Regional Conservation Partnership Program

Investing in Louisiana



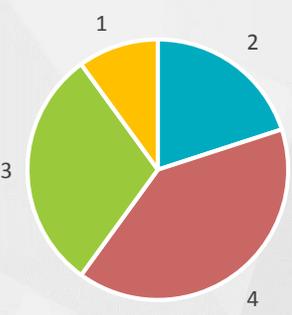
Regional Conservation Partnership Program

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 every state in the nation, including three in Louisiana. 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.

Louisiana Projects to Date

Projects by Resource Concern

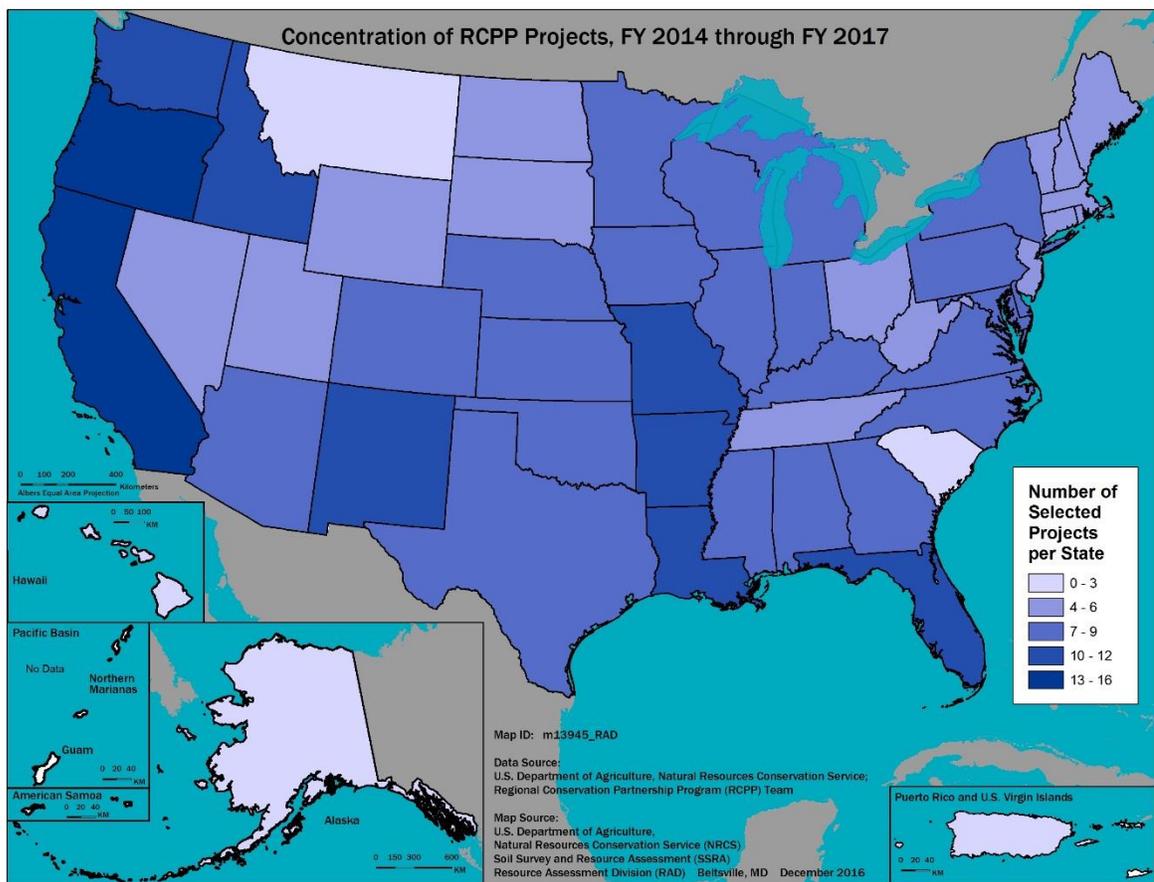


- Soil Health
- Water Quality
- Wildlife Habitat
- Water Quantity/Drought

10
Projects

\$27.2
million
NRCS Investment

104
Partners



Existing RCPP Projects

Year	Title	Funding Pool	Lead Partner	Number of Partners	NRCS Investment
2016	Restoring Coastal Prairie through Biofuels	State	The Earth Partners LP	4	\$613,000
2016	RSP: Improving Water Quality using Practice 590	State	Ducks Unlimited	5	\$800,000
2016	Shittail Canal Watershed Project	State	Caddo SWCD	8	\$360,000
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	Rice Stewardship Program - Southwest Louisiana	State	Ducks Unlimited, Inc.	9	\$1.5 million
2014/2015	Targeted Conservation Delivery to Improve Soil Health, Water Quantity and Quality	State	Louisiana Department of Agriculture & Forestry/Office of Soil & Water Conservation	6	\$100,000
2014/2015	Rice Stewardship Partnership - Sustaining the Future of Rice	National	Ducks Unlimited	39	\$10 million

2017 RCPP Projects

Fallow and Derelict Rice Land Enhancement

Proposed NRCS Investment: \$157,480 (State)

Lead Partner: Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry

Number of Initial Partners: 7

Participating States: Louisiana (Lead State)

The Fallow and Derelict Rice Land Enhancement project will focus on poorly drained, fallow and derelict rice fields in southwestern Louisiana. In this area, historically a tall-grass prairie ecotype, there are approximately 80,000 acres of fallow rice fields that are currently being grazed or are completely neglected and overgrown with Chinese tallow and other invasive or undesired tree and brush species. Across the same region, there also are approximately 100,000 un-leveed acres of undeveloped rangeland, some of which may have been periodically cropped in rice, soybeans or sorghum in past decades and which currently are grazed at low stocking rates with little or no form of prescribed grazing, forage management, mowing, prescribed burning or other favorable vegetative enhancements. With slight to moderate vegetative enhancement and hydrologic restoration practices applied to most of these overgrown areas, wetland prairie habitat potential will quickly rebound and may prove as seasonally beneficial and resilient a waterfowl/whooping crane habitat as most rice stubble fields.



Gulf of Mexico Hypoxia Reduction

Proposed NRCS Investment: \$157,480 (State)

Lead Partner: Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry - Office of Soil and Water Conservation

Number of Initial Partners: 5

Participating States: Louisiana (Lead State)

The Gulf of Mexico Hypoxia Reduction project partners will develop strategies to minimize quick nutrient loss from precision agriculture and mitigate nutrient runoff after irrigation or rain events. By managing the amount of fertilizer spread and proper placement of fertilizer, loss of excess nutrients will be lowered, reducing the amount of fertilizers that reach the Gulf.

Vermilion River Working Lands, Wildlife and Water

Proposed NRCS Investment: \$1,500,000 (State)

Lead Partner: The Conservation Fund

Number of Initial Partners: 5

Participating States: Louisiana (Lead State)

The Vermilion Parish Working Lands, Wildlife and Water Partnership project aims to permanently conserve large-scale agricultural lands within the coastal zone of Louisiana, with substantial natural resource value, through the purchase of conservation easements under Agricultural Conservation Easement Program. The focus lands in Vermilion Parish are under threat of conversion, with real potential for loss of wildlife habitat and further water quality degradation critical to the economy and environment both locally and across the broader geography of the Gulf of Mexico. Big picture success would be completing this first of its kind project, using this success to replicate an innovative agricultural lands protection model across the state.