

# Regional Conservation Partnership Program

Investing in North Carolina



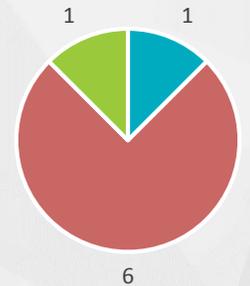
## Regional Conservation Partnership Program

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 North Carolina. 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.

### North Carolina Projects to Date

#### Projects by Resource Concern



- Degraded Plant Condition
- Water Quality
- Wildlife Habitat

**8**

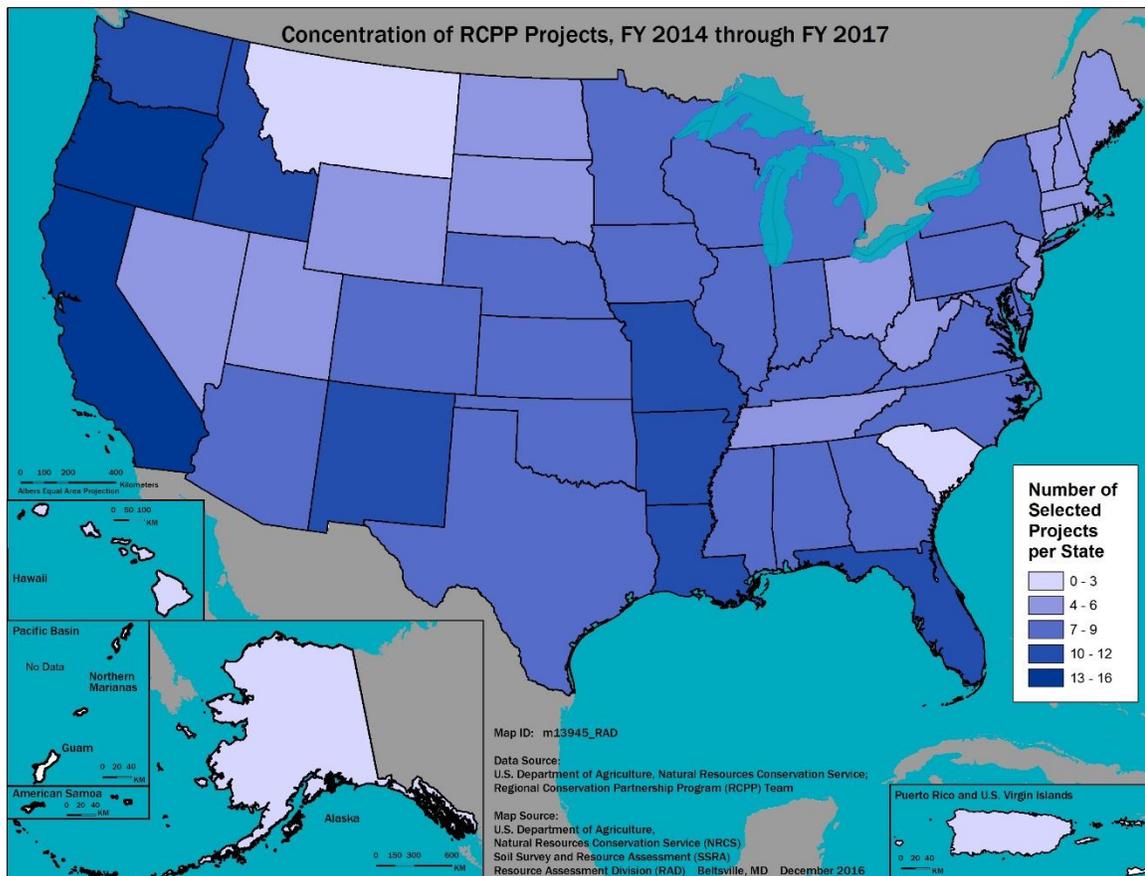
Projects

**\$28.1 million**

NRCS Investment

**60**

Partners



## Existing RCPP Projects

Year	Title	Funding Pool	Lead Partner	Number of Partners	NRCS Investment
2016	African American Forest Restoration and Retention	CCA	U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities	6	\$1.6 million
2016	MBGro: NC Grain Nutrient Management & Soil Health	State	Environmental Defense Fund	8	\$500,000
2016	Southern Sentinel Landscapes Conservation	National	U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities	20	\$7.5 million
2016	Western NC Stream & Water Quality Initiative	State	Resource Institute, Inc.	3	\$1 million
2014/2015	Western North Carolina Stream, Wetland, and Water Quality Initiative	State	Resource Institute, Inc.	4	\$1.5 million

## 2017 RCPP Projects

### Forever Farms: Easements at the Eminence

Proposed NRCS Investment: \$8,000,000 (National)  
Lead Partner: Blue Ridge Forever  
Number of Initial Partners: 14  
Participating States: North Carolina (Lead State)

The Southern Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina contain the headwater sources of drinking water for millions of people throughout the South Eastern United States, in nine river basins emanating on either side of the Eastern Continental Divide. Large mountain farms are particularly scarce because they are prone to fragmentation and development upon landowner succession, yet they are critically important for clean water and climate resiliency as they typically encompass diverse topography and significant alluvial floodplains. Through the project, Blue Ridge Forever and local partners will assist landowners with voluntary agricultural conservation easements to ensure these farms remain in agriculture.

### Western North Carolina Stream and Water Quality Initiative

Proposed NRCS Investment: \$7,000,000 (National)  
Lead Partner: Resource Institute, Inc.  
Number of Initial Partners: 3  
Participating States: North Carolina (Lead State)

The Western North Carolina Stream and Water Quality Initiative team will identify, implement and monitor projects that will restore, enhance and reestablish streams and wetlands that have been degraded by agricultural land use throughout Western North Carolina. Partners will provide local landowners with financial and technical assistance to



develop and implement cost effective solutions to improve at risk ecosystems. By improving function and increasing the amount of protected lands, riparian buffers and wetlands, the project will reduce the overall load of non-point source agricultural pollutants entering waterbodies in the region. This outcome will benefit resource users in the watershed and help producers reduce or avoid the need for regulation of agricultural land use.

## **Western North Carolina Stream and Water Quality Initiative**

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

Lead Partner: Resource Institute, Inc.

Number of Initial Partners: 2

Participating States: North Carolina (Lead State)

The Western North Carolina Stream and Water Quality Initiative will implement and monitor projects that will restore, enhance and reestablish streams and wetlands that have been degraded by agricultural land use in six western North Carolina counties. The project will provide measurable improvements in the quality of water resources in this region by reducing erosion, increasing aquatic habitat availability and diversity, restoring stream functions, promoting riparian and wetland areas, and increasing the amount of protected land along stream corridors. By improving function and increasing the amount of protected lands, riparian buffers and wetlands, the project will reduce the overall load of non-point source agricultural pollutants entering water bodies in the region. This outcome will benefit resource users in the watershed and help producers reduce or avoid the need for regulation of agricultural land use. The project will include public outreach and education about of economic development, particularly the co-existence of agriculture and conservation.