

# Regional Conservation Partnership Program

Investing in Puerto Rico



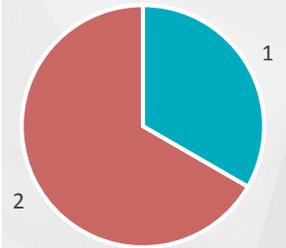
## Regional Conservation Partnership Program

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 two in Puerto Rico. 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.

### Puerto Rico Projects to Date

#### Projects by Resource Concern



■ Soil Health  
■ Water Quantity/Drought

**3**

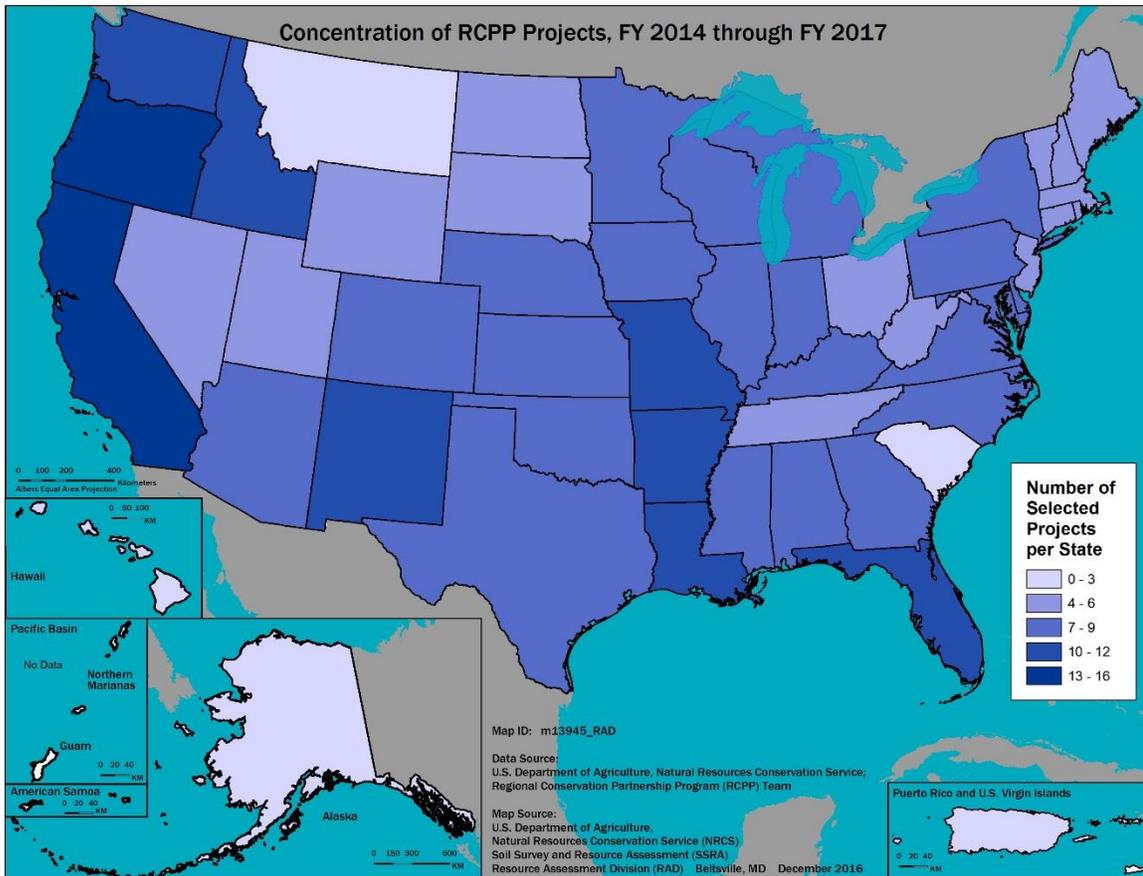
Projects

**\$3.6 million**

NRCS Investment

**14**

Partners



## Existing RCPP Projects

Year	Title	Funding Pool	Lead Partner	Number of Partners	NRCS Investment
2014/2015	Conservation Partnership Program for the Yabucoa Agricultural Reserve	State	Soil Conservation District of Eastern Puerto Rico	4	\$700,000

## 2017 RCPP Projects

### Sugar Cane Industry Restoration Project

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

Lead Partner: Serralles Agricultural, LLC

Number of Initial Partners: 3

Participating States: Puerto Rico (Lead State)

Through the Sugar Cane Industry Restoration project, Serralles Agricultural LLC, the Government of Puerto Rico and multiple private landowners will promote sugar cane agriculture in the western and southern regions of Puerto Rico through agricultural management and natural resources conservation practices. The partners will restore and expand existing water systems to preserve and enhance local aquifers, particularly in the arid south, while increasing the productivity of agriculture in these economically depressed regions. The Project also will improve soil structure and limit erosion and water runoff, while enhancing air quality, especially in Ponce where sugar cane bagasse will replace oil for boilers at the Serralles Distillery and reduce carbon dioxide levels.

### Adaptation Measures in Southwestern Puerto Rico

Proposed NRCS Investment: \$918,460 (State)

Lead Partner: Southwest Soil and Water Conservation District

Number of Initial Partners: 7

Participating States: Puerto Rico (Lead State)

The Lajas irrigation system located in southwestern Puerto Rico was built in the mid-1950 to supply four acre-foot of supplemental irrigation water to nearly 20,000 acres of fertile agriculture land. Through the Adaptation Measure in Southwestern Puerto Rico project, the Southwest Soil and Conservation District and six partners will build a new water conveying system and feed several water storage lagoons to supply water by gravity to participating farms in the area to a semiarid region with fertile soils. The partners will develop application tools to assist farmers on when and how much water to apply for optimal soil moisture and water resources in the region. The partners will make applications available to all farmers in the region so they can decide when and how much to irrigate based on simple data entry quests that uses information on crops and date of planting. The rest of the information will be retrieved from existing SSURGO databases, a new USGS climatological network for the area.

