

Regional Conservation Partnership Program

Investing in Texas



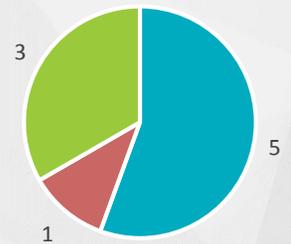
Regional Conservation Partnership Program

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 Texas. 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.

Texas Projects to Date

Projects by Resource Concern



- Water Quantity/Drought
- Water Quality
- Wildlife Habitat

9

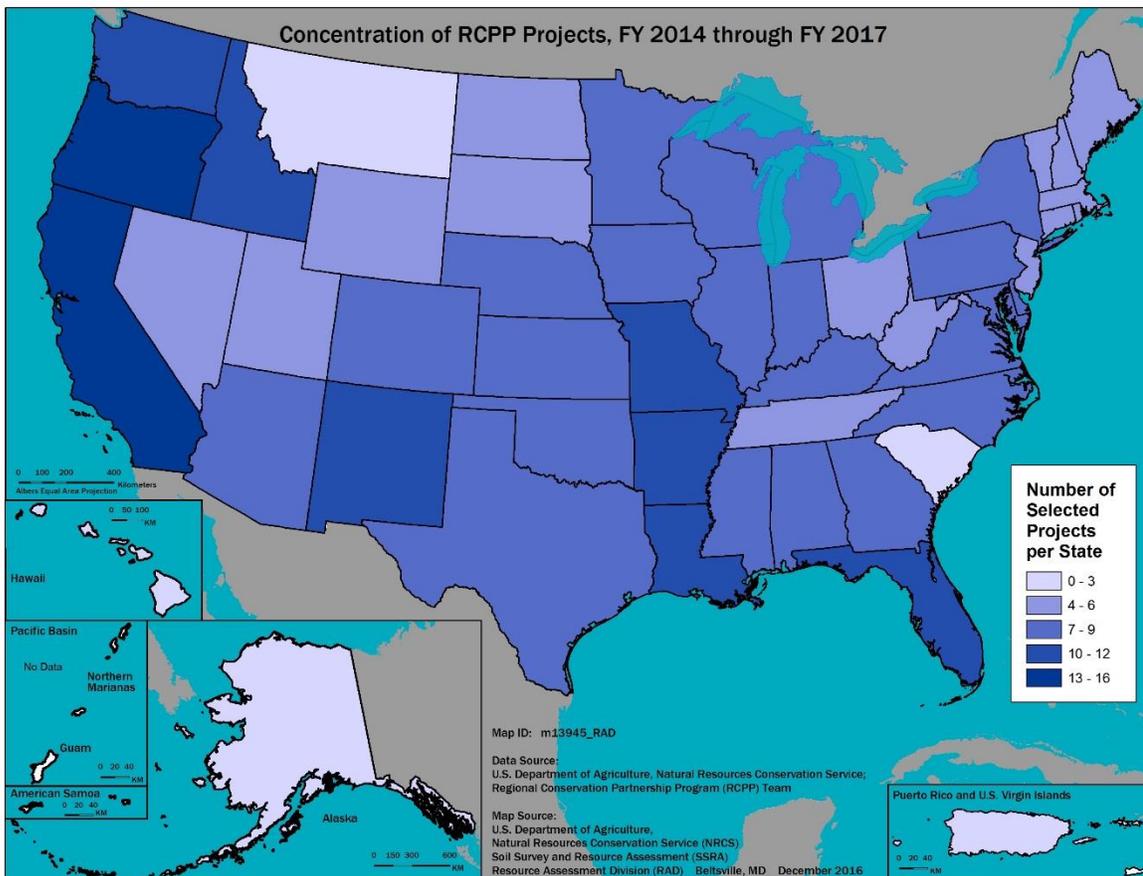
Projects

\$45.9 million

NRCS Investment

113

Partners



Existing RCPP Projects

Year	Title	Funding Pool	Lead Partner	Number of Partners	NRCS Investment
2016	Fort Hood Private Lands Conservation Initiative	State	Compatible Lands Foundation	1	\$700,000
2016	Improving Working Lands for Monarch Butterflies	National	National Fish and Wildlife Foundation	12	\$6 million
2016	Limited Applied Irrigation Assistance Program	State	High Plains Underground Water District	16	\$2 million
2014/2015	Lower Rio Grande Valley Water Improvement Initiative	State	Texas Water Resources Institute	6	\$4.3 million
2014/2015	Texas Gulf Coast Stream and Wetland Initiative	State	Resource Institute, Inc.	6	\$7.1 million
2014/2015	Rice Stewardship Partnership - Sustaining the Future of Rice	National	Ducks Unlimited	39	\$10 million

2017 RCPP Projects

Oaks and Prairie Joint Venture Grassland Restoration Incentive Program

Proposed NRCS Investment: \$2,925,000 (Critical Conservation Area – Prairie Grasslands Region)

Lead Partner: National Wild Turkey Federation

Number of Initial Partners: 8

Participating States: Oklahoma and Texas (Lead State)

The Oaks and Prairie Joint Venture partners, with the National Wild Turkey Federation serving as the lead partner, will address the significant decline in grassland wildlife populations and loss of natural hydrologic conditions through the improvement and restoration of native grassland ecosystems in the southern great plains. The project will include dedicated staff to work side by side with staff from Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, Texas and Oklahoma NRCS, and other OPJV partner organizations to strategically deliver grassland ecosystem improvement projects on private lands. Through this collaborative effort, the OPJV will continue to offer their highly successful Grassland Restoration Incentive Program. The program has already delivered over \$1.1 million in funding to producers who have restored wildlife habitat on over 57,000 acres of grasslands in its first 3 years of existence. Additional financial assistance will be provided through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program on qualifying projects in Texas and Oklahoma. The deliverable for this combined effort is 95,000 acres of improved native grasslands over the life of the project.



Lower Colorado River Authority Regional Conservation Partnership Program

Proposed NRCS Investment: \$8,000,000 (Critical Conservation Area – Prairie Grasslands Region)

Lead Partner: Lower Colorado River Authority

Number of Initial Partners: 21

Participating States: Texas (Lead State)

The Lower Colorado River Authority and partners will construct an off-channel reservoir in Colorado County to increase the region's water supply and help preserve regional economies susceptible to frequent and prolonged droughts. The reservoir will provide critically needed irrigation water to farmers and Lakeside rice fields, which also provide habitat for waterfowl and water birds. The project will implement complementary Conservation Stewardship Program or CSP enhancements in Colorado, Wharton and Matagorda counties near the Texas Gulf Coast, including outreach and funding for CSP enhancements on rice lands that provide habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife and aid in water conservation.

Elm Creek Watershed Regional Conservation Partnership Program

Proposed NRCS Investment: \$4,912,000 (Critical Conservation Area – Prairie Grasslands Region)

Lead Partner: Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board

Number of Initial Partners: 4

Participating States: Texas (Lead State)

The Elm Creek (1250) Watershed Plan and Environmental Impact Statement were developed and authorized by the Natural Resources Conservation Service in 1981. The watershed plan, to be updated with a supplement, consists of seven floodwater retarding structures, two floodwater dikes, accelerated technical assistance for cropland erosion control and development of upland wildlife habitat. Due to funding limitations, only three floodwater retarding structures have been built in the Elm Creek Watershed (3R, 6R, and 7R). This Elm Creek Watershed project will include construction of one floodwater retarding structure, Site 1A, and assistance to agricultural producers for erosion control, water quality improvement, brush management and upland wildlife habitat improvement.