



Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

Investing in Alabama - 2016

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 demonstrate the value and efficacy of voluntary, private lands conservation.

In 2016, NRCS is investing up to \$220 million in 84 high-impact projects that impact every state in the nation, including two in Alabama. This investment, which builds on the \$370 million invested for 2014 and 2015, will help conservation partners and agricultural producers conserve natural resources, leading to cleaner and more abundant water, healthier soil, enhanced wildlife habitat and many other benefits.

African American Forest Restoration and Retention

Proposed NRCS Investment: \$1.6 million (CCA)

Lead Partner: U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities

Number of Partners: 6

Participating State(s): Alabama, North Carolina & South Carolina (**lead state**)

Through an existing partnership, the Sustainable Forestry and African American Land Retention Program (SFLR), this project will address degraded plant conditions and enhancement of wildlife habitat by supporting forest restoration on African American-owned forestlands in high poverty regions of the Southeastern United States. In this region, African American family-owned forests tend to be degraded due to lack of pro-active forest management. During its 30-month pilot phase, the SFLR program was effective at building a bridge of trust between landowners and USDA programs supporting 157 EQIP applications for forestry practices with more than \$1 million in EQIP contracts directed to African American project participants. The project will support landowners through direct provision of forestry, land tenure (heirs' property) and technical services as well as the brokering of services from other private and government providers including forestry commissions, consulting foresters, extension services and conservation organizations.

Coastal Headwaters Longleaf Forest

Proposed NRCS Investment: \$5.1 million (CCA)

Lead Partner: The Conservation Fund

Number of Partners: 15

Participating State(s): Alabama

The Coastal Headwaters Forests (CHF) Partnership will address the natural resource concerns of the Longleaf Pine Range in Alabama's Gulf Coastal Plain. Once stretching across 90 million acres in the Southwest, only four percent of Longleaf pine forests now remain. The CHF Partnership brings partners and resources together to conserve and restore longleaf pine habitat on private lands, as more than 90 percent of forest land in the southeast is in private ownership. This partnership is innovative because it is more than just easements; it will allow producers to conserve, restore and manage large properties permanently for longleaf pine habitat and threatened/endangered species in a way that benefits the economy and environment and create a model for other areas to replicate. By restoring longleaf pine, this project will preserve four major coastal river systems in the Gulf Coast Plain and protect habitat for the threatened gopher tortoise and approximate 600 other species related to longleaf pine habitat.

