



Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

Investing in Alaska - 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 one in Alaska. 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.

Innovative Tribal Conservation and GHG Management

Proposed NRCS Investment: \$1.8 million (National)

Lead Partner: Intertribal Agriculture Council

Number of Partners: 9

Participating State(s): Alaska, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma & South Dakota (**lead state**)

As the impacts of climate change become more pronounced in Indian country, Native nations and Indian landowners are faced with the challenge of implementing resource conservation land management systems that incorporate greenhouse gas management activities, also known as carbon farming practices. As greenhouse gas management services gain value in environmental markets, it is vital that historically underserved tribal conservation programs and American Indian farmers and ranchers develop conservation projects that demonstrate causal relationships between soil quality and ecosystem production functions such as carbon sequestration. This project will address the need for conservation stewardship projects on American Indian lands that integrate a carbon farming production possibilities frontier component. The project area will be national in scope covering a diversity of tribal rangeland landscape types including Southwest Alaska, prairie grassland and Colorado River Basin regions. The project includes developing and implementing soil amendment, forestry and grazing management Conservation Activity Plans (CAP) and Conservation Stewardship Plans (CSP) on pilot project sites. The CAP/CSPs will establish a framework for inventorying the existing baseline carbon sequestration rate and propose cost-effective conservation practices to achieve multiple environmental quality and economic development goals. One of the anticipated outcomes from this project will be the development of carbon offsets from soil amendment and grazing land and livestock management activities. We will engage private investment in those pilot project sites that both meet investors and credit buyers' interest in charismatic high-quality carbon offsets, and tribes' interest in promoting appropriate conservation practices and economic development on Indian lands.

