



Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

Investing in New York - 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 four in New York. 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.

Enhancement to the NYC Watershed Ag Program

Proposed NRCS Investment: \$1.2 million (State)

Lead Partner: Watershed Agricultural Council of the NYC Watersheds, Inc.

Number of Partners: 1

Participating State(s): New York

The Watershed Agricultural Program (WAP) is a conservation partnership that develops and maintains Whole Farm Plans on active farms within the NYC water supply watersheds. Currently, there are 298 farms in the Catskill and Delaware watersheds that are participating in the WAP and are the focus of this project. Partners will work with the WAP farmers to accelerate implementation of conservation practices for the purpose of protecting surface water quality for the 9 million consumers of the NYC Water Supply. EQIP funds will allow additional water quality protection measures that address agricultural waste management to be implemented, while also assisting NYC with meeting federal and state regulatory requirements associated with the Safe Drinking Water Act.

Genesee River Sediment and Phosphorus Reduction

Proposed NRCS Investment: \$3 million (CCA)

Lead Partner: New York State Soil & Water Conservation Committee

Number of Partners: 4

Participating State(s): Pennsylvania & New York (**lead state**)

The Genesee River Sediment and Phosphorus Reduction project will address pollutants entering Lake Ontario. Sediment and phosphorus loading from the Genesee River has been identified as having significant negative impacts on near-shore waters and aquatic habitat and possibly impacting human health through harmful algal blooms. The Genesee River Watershed is heavily farmed with 52% of the land base being in agricultural production. Through this RCPP Project, EQIP funding will be used to address phosphorus laden sediment inputs entering the Genesee River directly or through tributaries. Projects will focus on soil health and riparian corridor management, as well as, sediment control practices on lands adjacent to watercourses.



This project will work with an array of state and local programs to remove the impaired portions of the Genesee River targeted for TMDL development on the CWA Section 303(d) list.

Upper Susquehanna Agricultural BMP Implementation

Proposed NRCS Investment: \$4.1 million (CCA)

Lead Partner: Tioga County Soil and Water Conservation District

Number of Partners: 2

Participating State(s): New York

Since agriculture has been identified as a major source sector of nutrients and sediment, it's critical that farms in the Upper Susquehanna River watershed need to adapt and implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce their environmental impacts. This project will address nutrient reductions and water quality improvements locally by increasing landowner enrollment in USDA EQIP conservation program and by installing conservation practices that will address local, state and national water quality objectives.

The Young Forest Initiative for At-Risk Species

Proposed NRCS Investment: \$5.2 million (National)

Lead Partner: Wildlife Management Institute

Number of Partners: 12

Participating State(s): Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire (**lead state**), New York, Rhode Island & Vermont

This project will help increase technical and financial assistance to non-industrial private forestland owners who implement practices outlined in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program that result in an increase in the quantity and quality of young forest habitats. This support is critical, since young forest habitat is necessary to meet the critical needs of several recognized at-risk species.

