

NRCS Conservation Programs in Nebraska

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Environmental Quality Incentives Program



Environmental Quality Incentives Program

Program Changes in 2014 Farm Bill:

- Merged EQIP and WHIP
- Minimum 5% of funds for wildlife habitat
- Advanced payments up to 50%
- Re-established 60% of funds for livestock practices
- Single EQIP payment limitation \$450,000 FY2014 – FY2018
 - Eliminated waiver provisions
 - Eliminated 6 year rolling limit
- Veterans who qualify as beginning farmers and ranchers are eligible and high priority for increased payment rates

EQIP 2015 Practices

- Waste Storage Facilities
- Grazing Management
 - Ponds
 - Pipelines
 - Fence



EQIP 2015 Practices

Brush Management

Prescribed Burn



EQIP 2015 Practices

- Terraces
- Diversions
- Grade Stabs
- Waterways
- Underground Outlet
- No till
- Windbreak/Shelterbelt



EQIP 2015 Practices

- Seasonal High Tunnels
- Nutrient Mgmt
- Pest Mgmt
- Organic



EQIP 2015 Practices

Cover Crop

Rye planted in
a waterway for
erosion control



EQIP 2015 Practices

Cover Crop

Multi Species

Mix – Corn

Stalks &

Wheat

Stubble



EQIP 2015 Practices

- SDI Systems
- Sprinkler Systems
- IWM



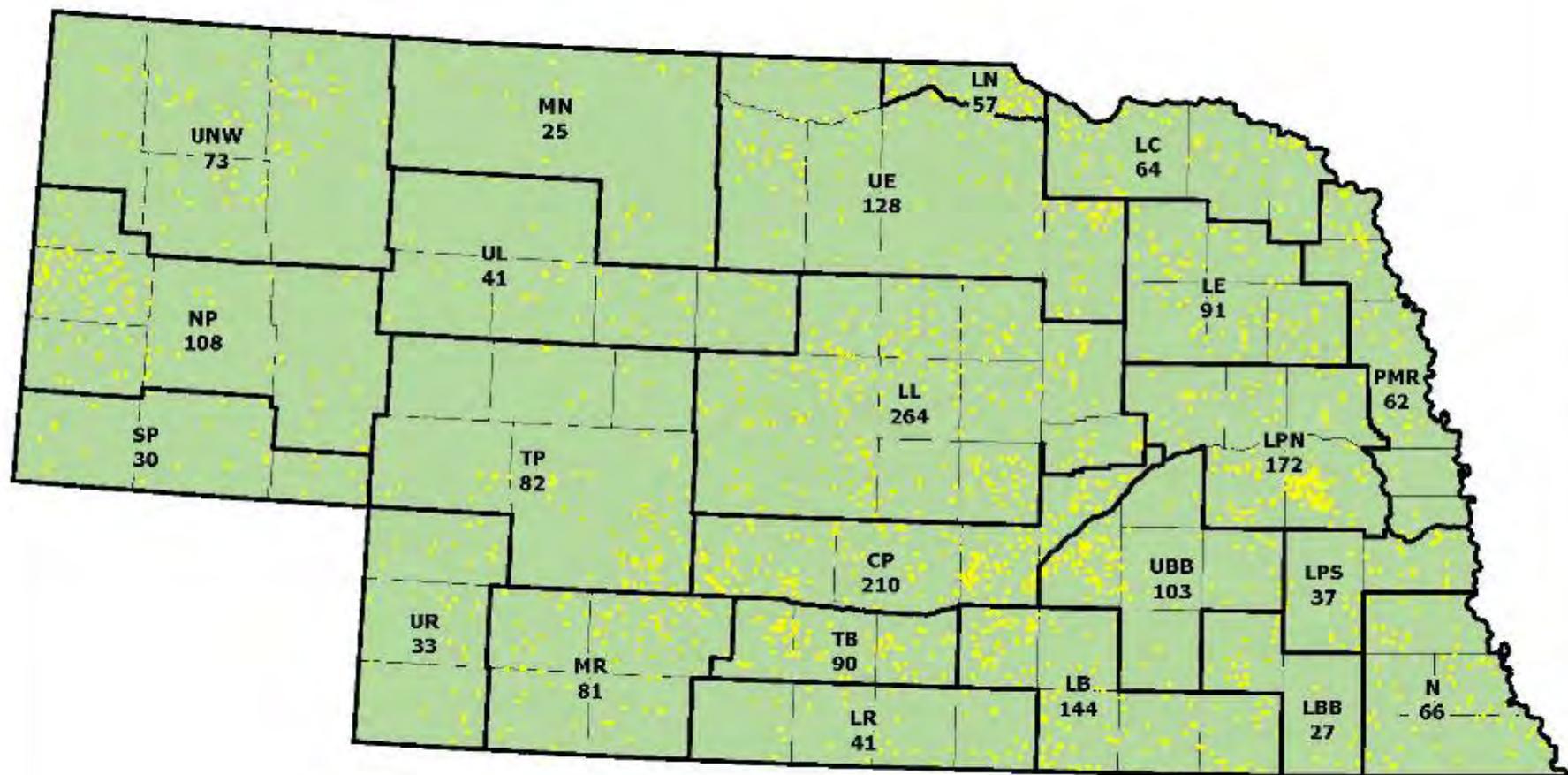






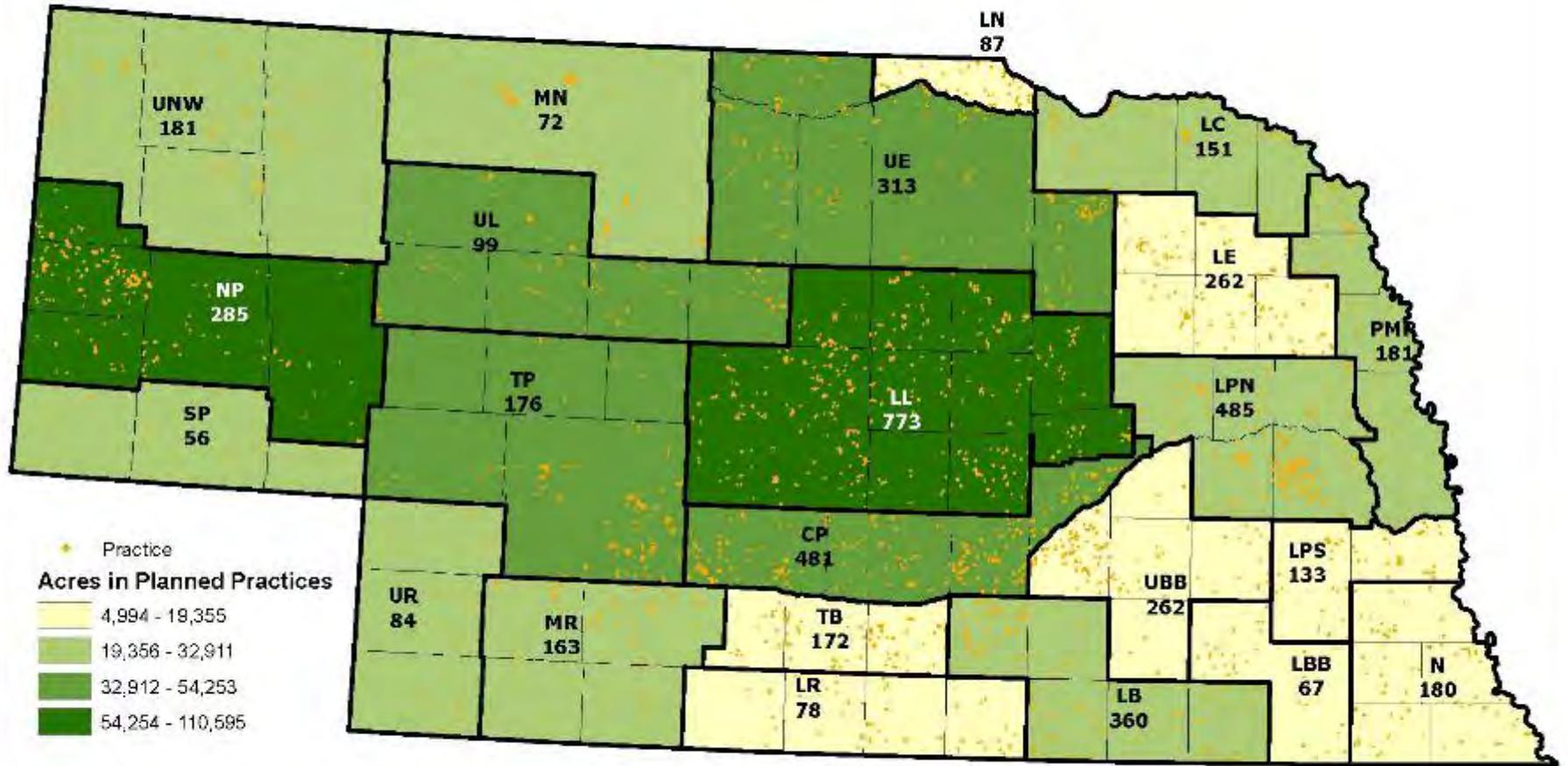


Nebraska Active EQIP Contracts As of 12/15/15



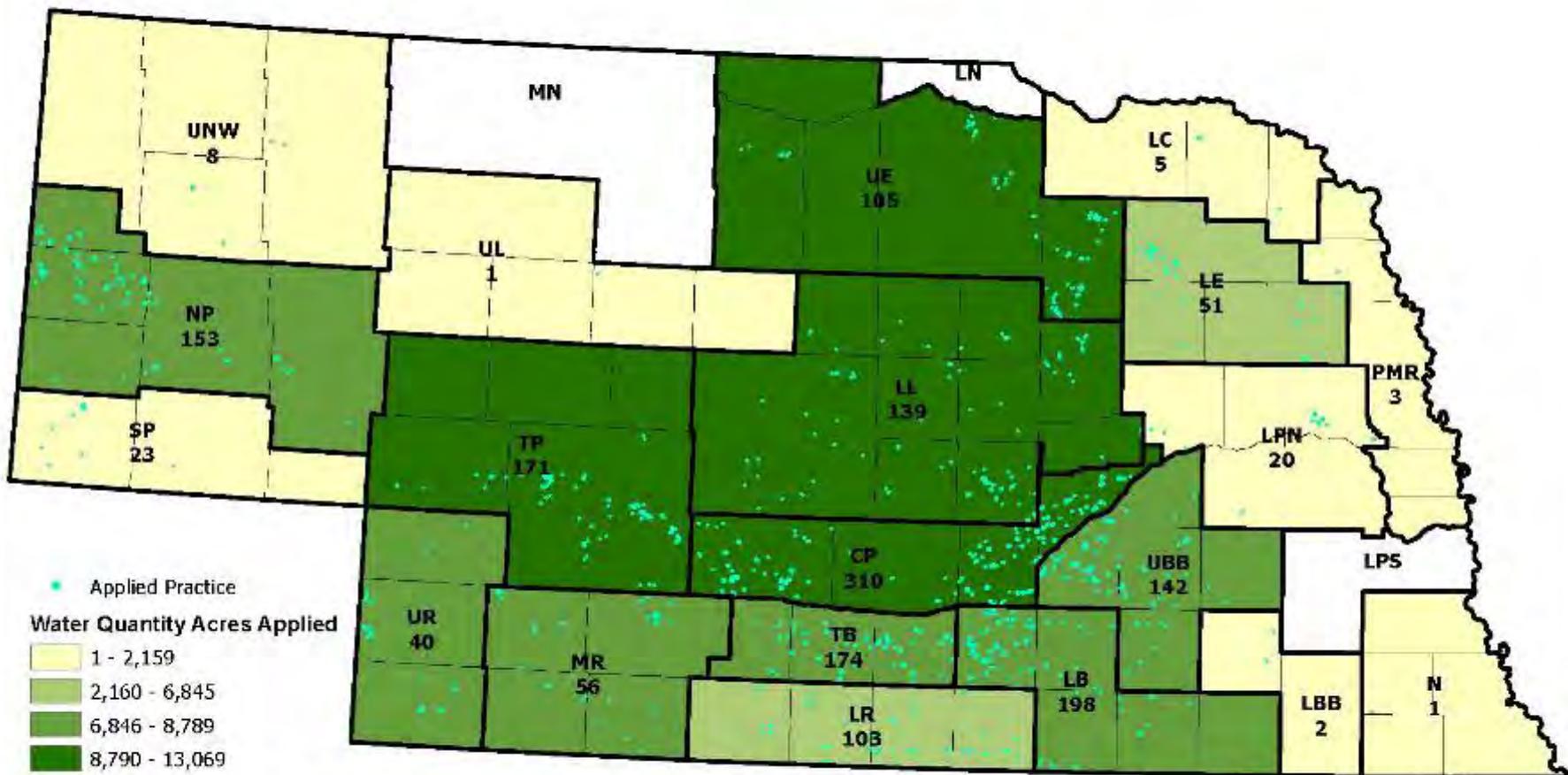
Total number of Active Contracts - 2,029

Nebraska EQIP Practices Planned thru 2016 As of 01/12/2016



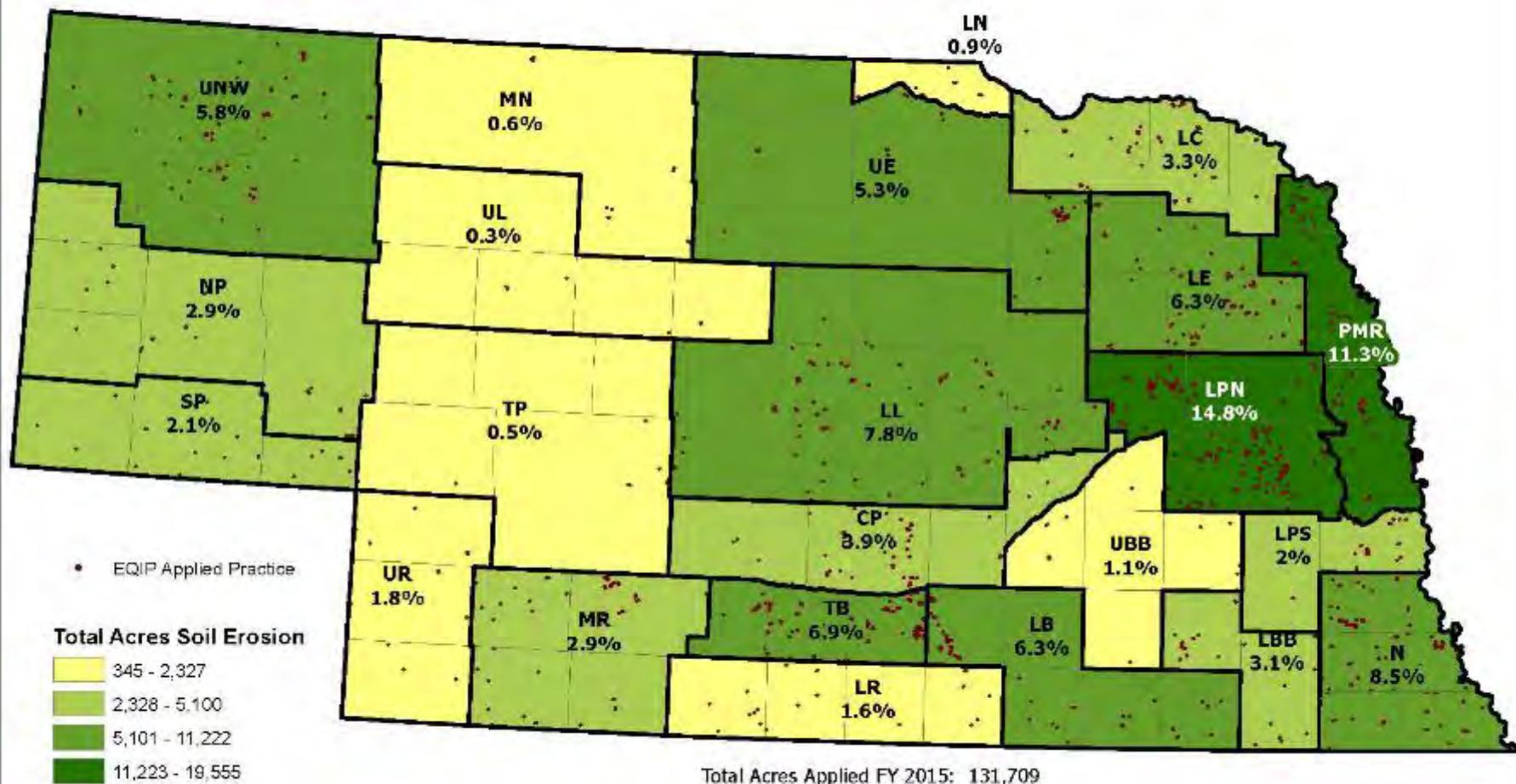
Total Number of Planned Practices - 5,101

Nebraska Water Quantity & Water Quality Applied EQIP Practices FY 2015 As of 01/12/2016



Total Number of Applied Practices - 1,826

Resource Concern: Soil Erosion
Total Acres EQIP Practices Applied - FY2015
Percent of Total
As of 12/15/15



EQIP Fund Pools in 2016



2016 Local Fund Pools

Cropland

- Soil Erosion
- Soil Quality Degradation
- Insufficient Water
- Excess Water
- Water Quality Degradation

2016 Local Fund Pools

Grassland

- Livestock Production Limitation
- Degraded Plant Condition
- Air Quality Impacts

2016 Area Fund Pools

Area 1– West

- Cropland – BFR/SD
- Grassland – BFR/SD

Area 2 – Central

- Cropland – BFR/SD
- Grassland – BFR/SD

Area 3 - East

- Cropland – BFR/SD
- Grassland – BFR/SD

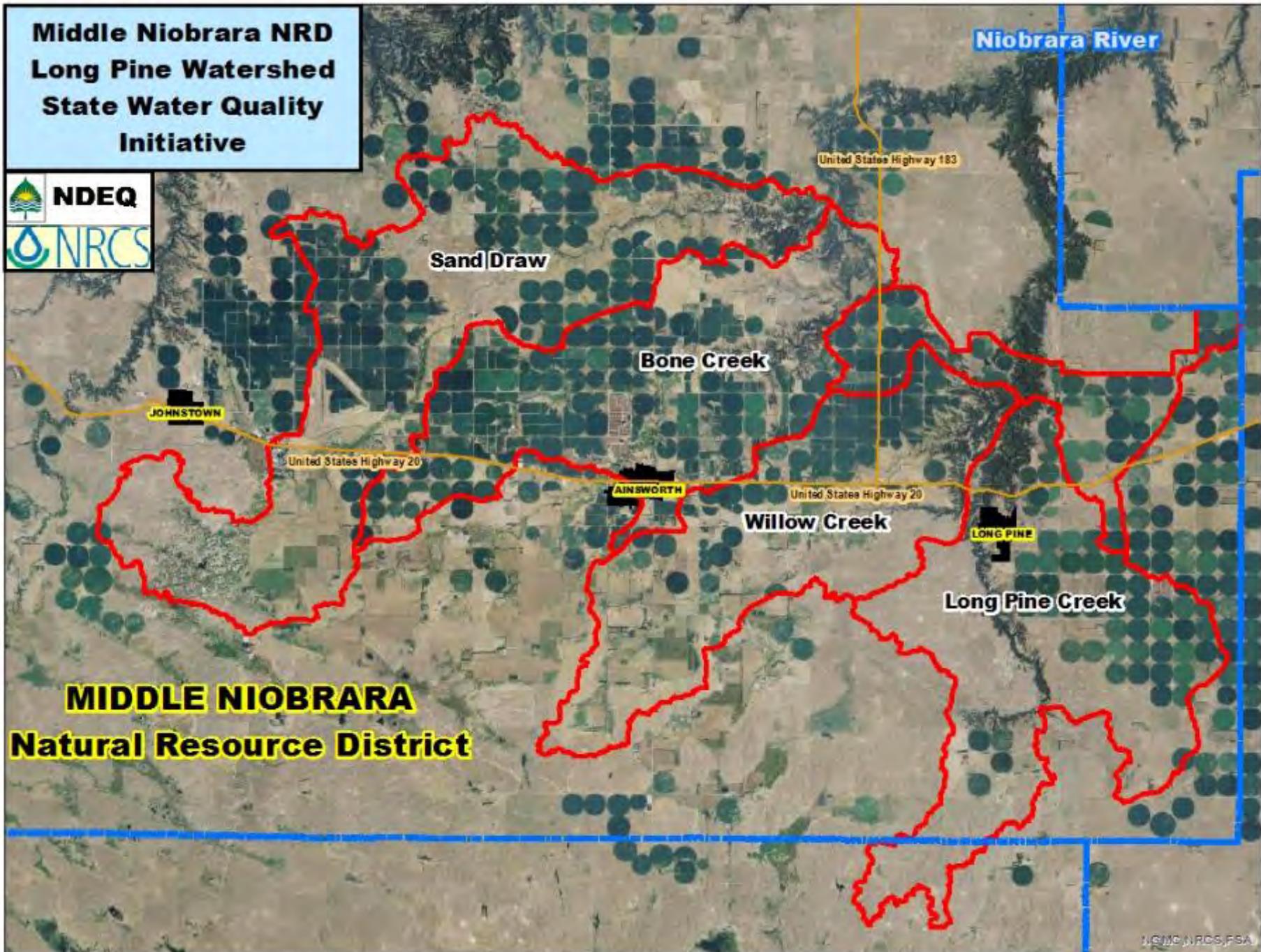
2016 STATE FUND POOLS

- **Special Initiatives - Nebraska**
 - Wildlife
 - Forestry
 - Seasonal High Tunnel
 - Animal Feeding Operations
 - Organic
 - Energy
 - Tribal
 - Conservation Activity Plans
 - Monarch Butterfly
 - Nebraska Water Quality Initiative

Nebraska Water Quality Initiative



**Middle Niobrara NRD
Long Pine Watershed
State Water Quality
Initiative**

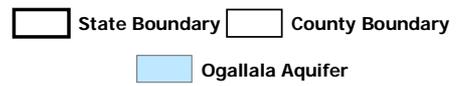


**MIDDLE NIOBRARA
Natural Resource District**

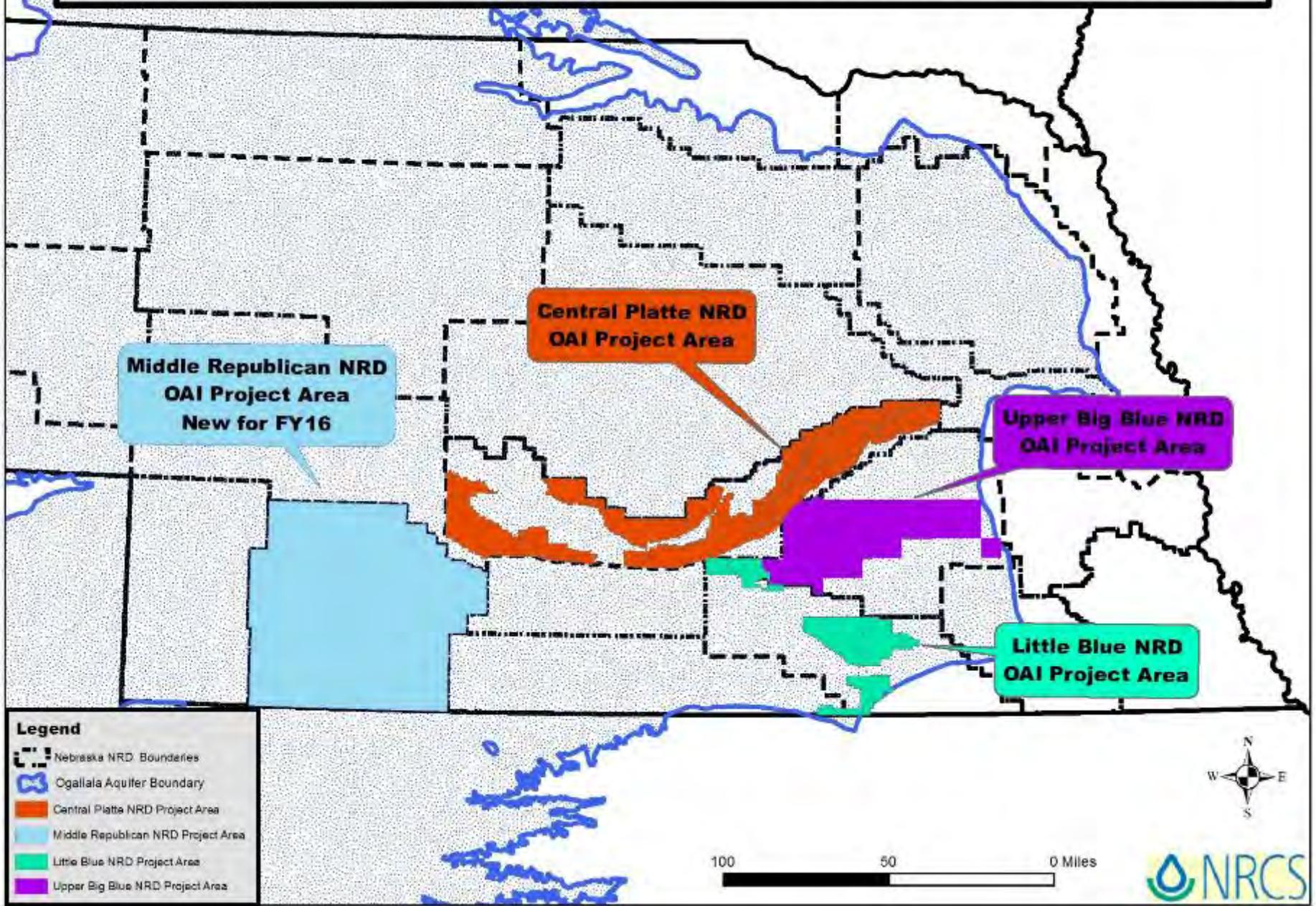
2016 State Fund Pools

- **Special Initiatives – National**
 - **Ogallala Aquifer Initiative**
 - **Landscape Initiative - 2008 Farm Bill**
 - **Implemented 2009**
 - **225,000 square miles across 8 States**
 - **112 million acres – 15.1 million Irrigated**
 - **30% of all groundwater used for Irrigation in US**
 - **Withdrawals outpace recharge = water level declines**
 - **Water quality degradation – Nutrient & Pesticides**

Ogallala Aquifer Initiative States & Counties



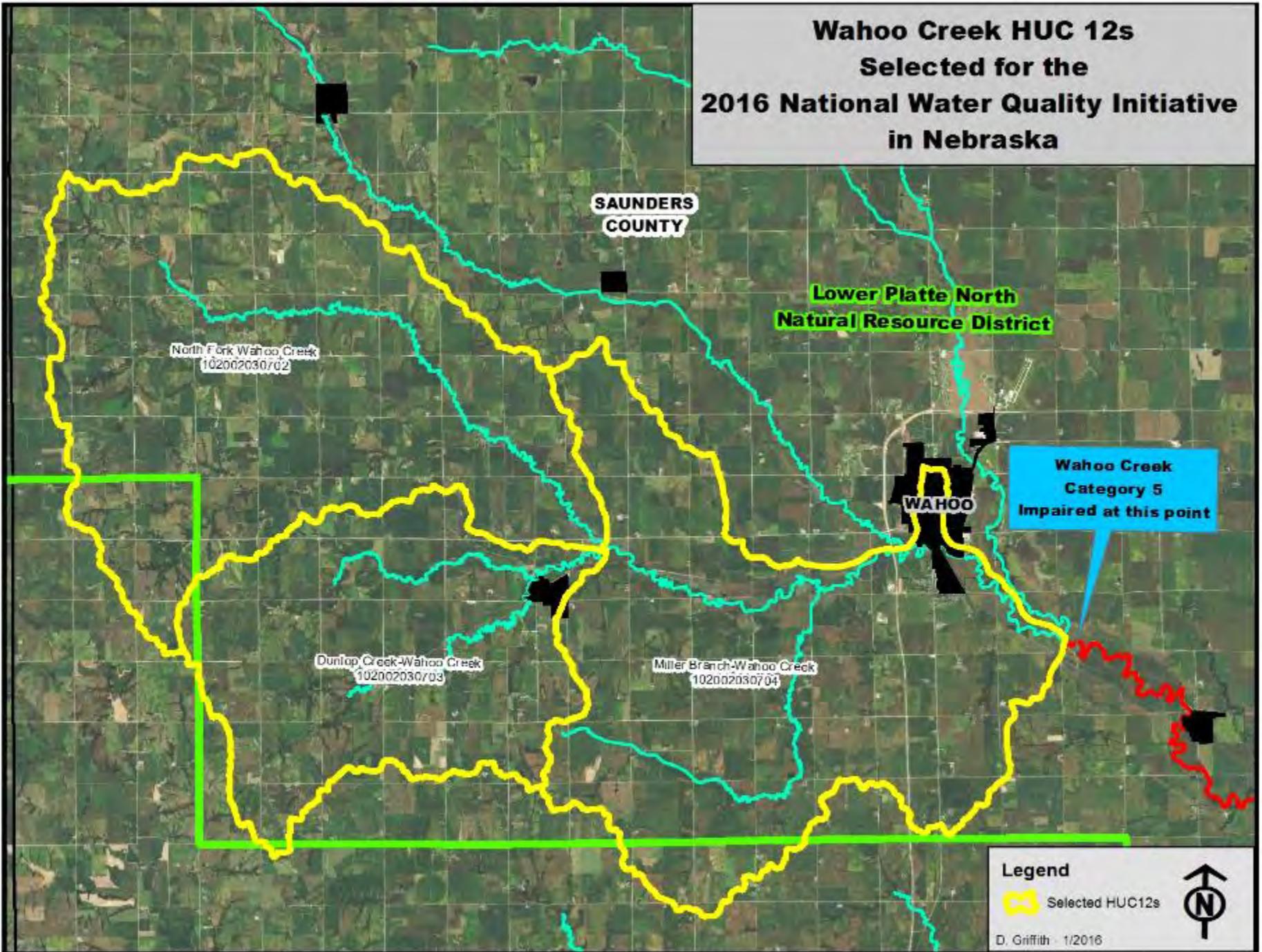
NEBRASKA 2016 OGALLALA INITIATIVE AREAS



2016 State Fund Pools

- **Special Initiatives – National**
 - **National Water Quality Initiative**
 - Wahoo Creek - Saunders
 - Bazile Creek – Antelope, Pierce, Knox

**Wahoo Creek HUC 12s
Selected for the
2016 National Water Quality Initiative
in Nebraska**



**SAUNDERS
COUNTY**

**Lower Platte North
Natural Resource District**

North Fork Wahoo Creek
102002030702

Dunlap Creek-Wahoo Creek
102002030703

Miller Branch-Wahoo Creek
102002030704

WAHOO

**Wahoo Creek
Category 5
Impaired at this point**

Legend

 Selected HUC12s

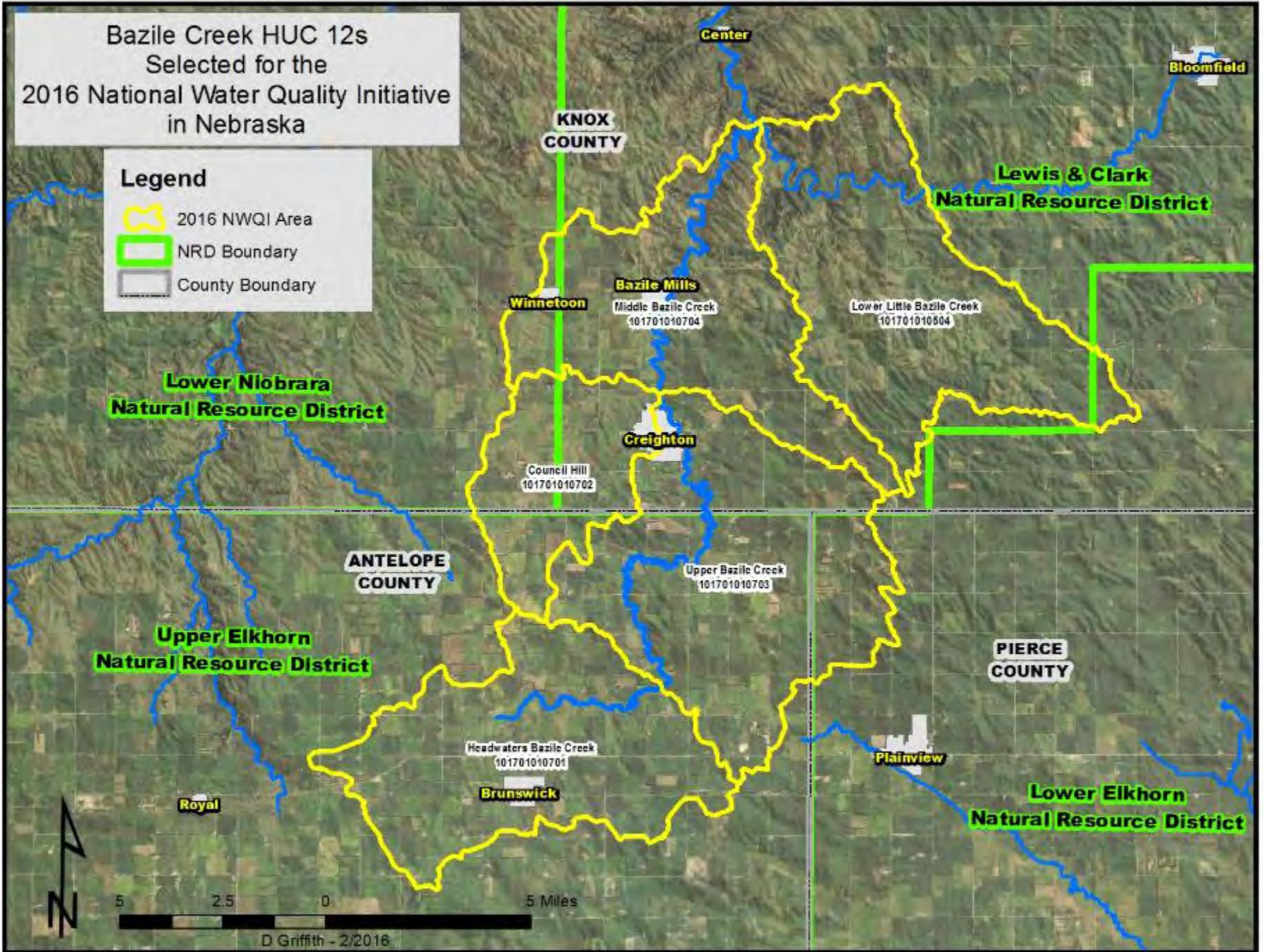
D. Griffith 1/2016



Bazile Creek HUC 12s
Selected for the
2016 National Water Quality Initiative
in Nebraska

Legend

- 2016 NWQI Area
- NRD Boundary
- County Boundary



EQIP Fund Allocations in 2016



EQIP Fund Allocations in 2016

- EQIP – National Initiatives \$3.2 million
 - Ogallala SI \$ 2.4 million
 - 4 Focus Areas: UBBNRD, LBNRD, CPNRD, MRNRD
 - NWQI \$ 863,000
 - 2 watersheds: Bazile Creek, Wahoo Creek
- EQIP General \$ 17.4 million
 - EQIP General Distribution
 - State Initiatives \$ 3.5 million
 - Historically Underserved & BFR \$ 1.7 million
 - Balance to LWG Fund Pools \$ 12.2 million

EQIP Fund Allocations in 2016

– State Initiatives

• Forestry	\$ 500,000
• Wildlife	\$ 870,000
• Monarch Butterfly	\$ 100,000
• Tribal	\$ 100,000
• AFO	\$ 1,000,000
• NE WQI	\$ 400,000

EQIP Fund Allocations in 2016

– State/National Initiatives

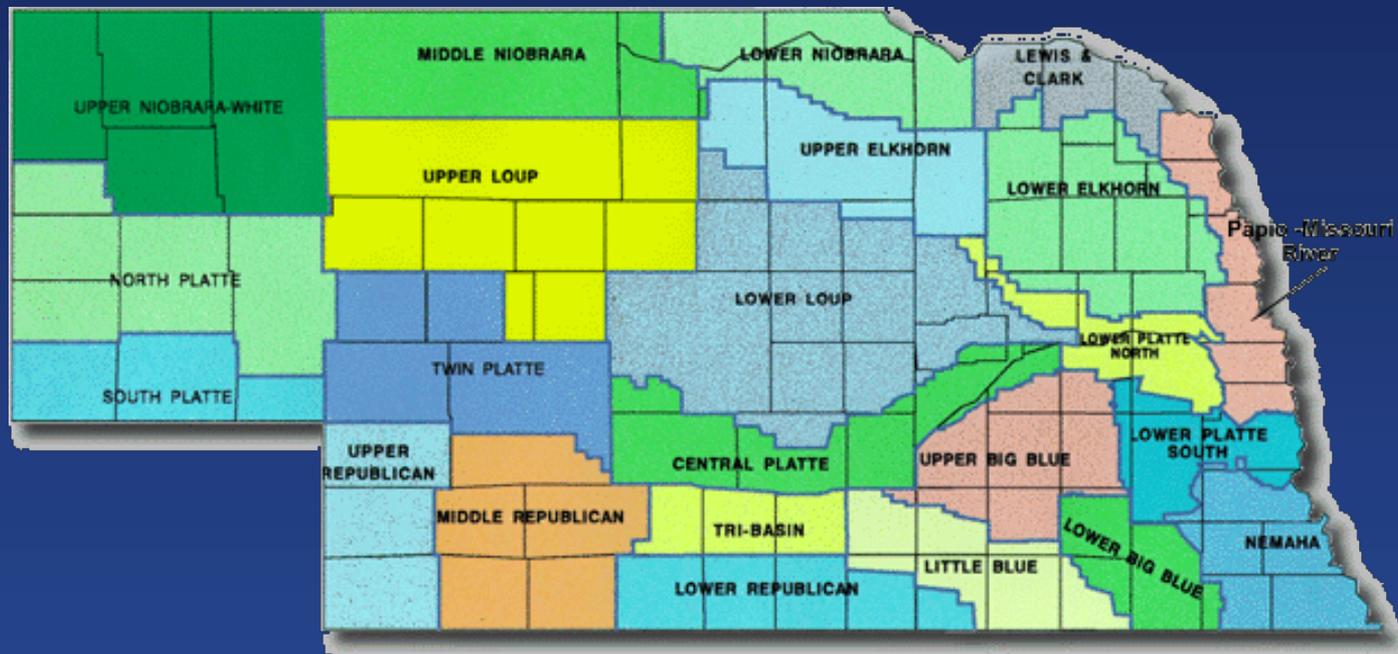
•Organic	\$ 200,000
•Energy	\$ 25,000
•High Tunnel	\$ 100,000
•CAP-CNMP	\$ 200,000
•(Pending) Climate Change	\$ 1.8 million
•(Pending) Soil Health	\$ -----

EQIP – FY2017 Time Lines

- Local Work Group Meetings – Feb/March

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

- Local Work Groups



EQIP – FY2017 State Policy

- Local Work Group Recommendations
- Example:
 - Upper Niobrara White LWG requests
 - Payment for Livestock Shelter, practice (576)
 - Payment for Solar pumps on Existing Wells
 - Allow red cedar as option in windbreaks

EQIP – FY2017 Time Lines

- Practice Payment Schedule
 - Submit scenario recommendations – March 25
 - Final Changes to Practices & Costs – April 29
 - Final practice/scenario selections – July 15
 - Complete payment % / Final cost – August 26
- Ranking Tools Completed – September 16
- Application Cutoff – October 21st

FY2017 State Policy

- State Subcommittee Recommendations
- Meeting dates TBD – May/June
 - EQIP
 - Forestry
 - Wildlife
 - Soil Health
 - CSP
 - Easements

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)



RCPP Funding

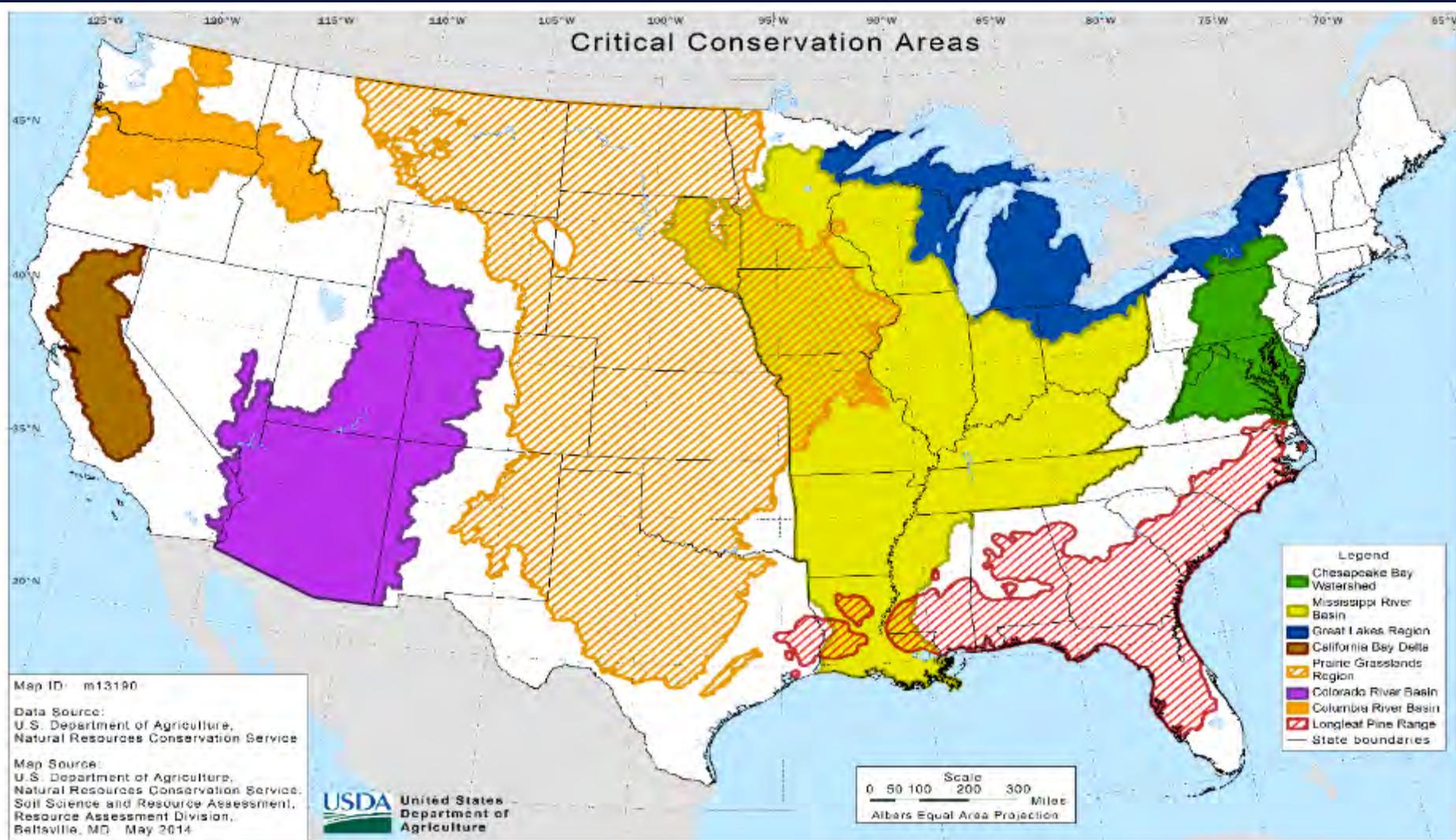
Available Funding - National

- \$100 Million of Direct RCPP funding each year
- 7% of funds from the four covered programs (ACEP, CStP, EQIP, HFRP) reserved annually through April 1st

Allocates funding by:

- 40% for projects based on a national competitive process;
- 25% for a state competitive process administered by the State Conservationist, and;
- 35% for projects in critical conservation areas.

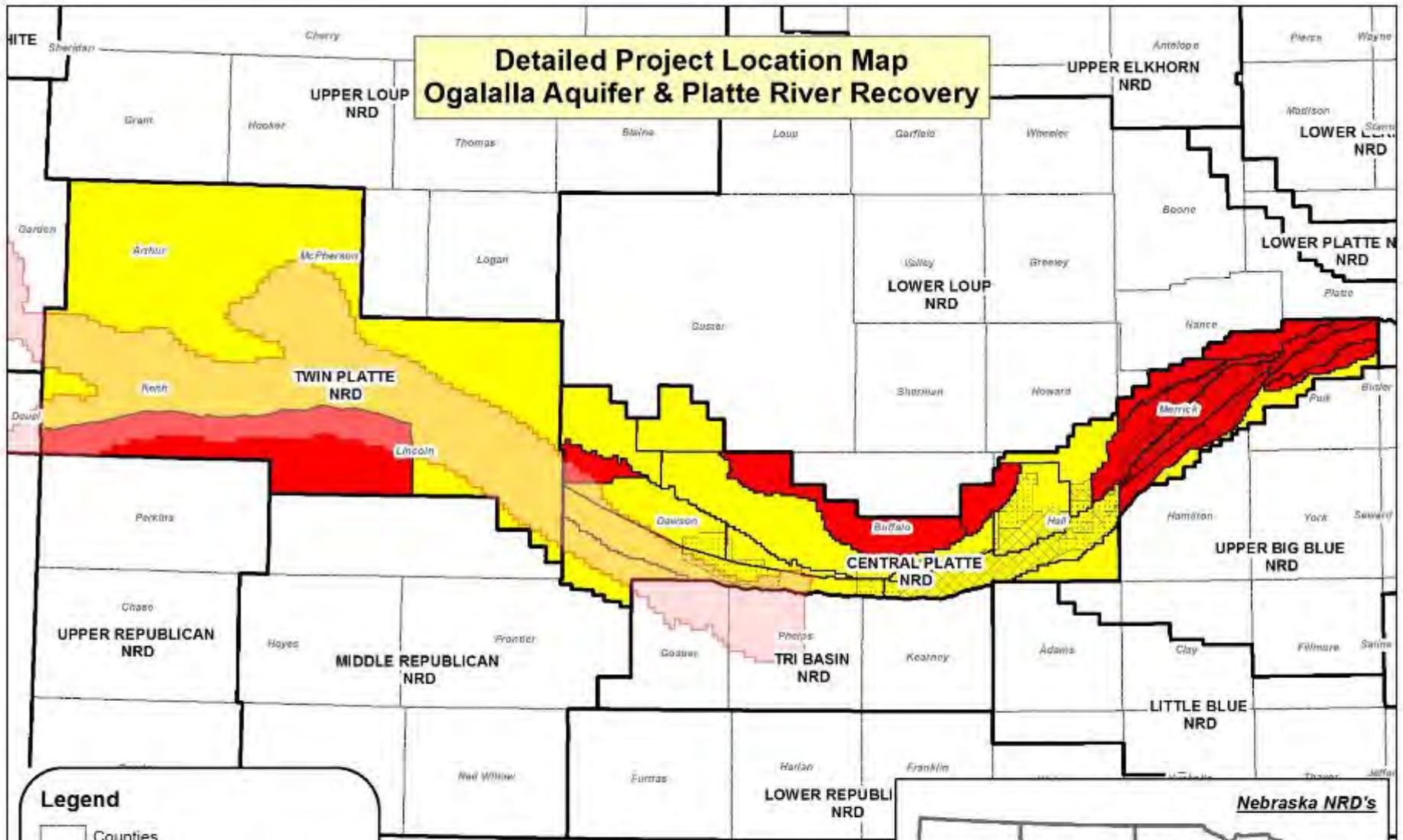




FY15 RCPP Approvals - Nebraska

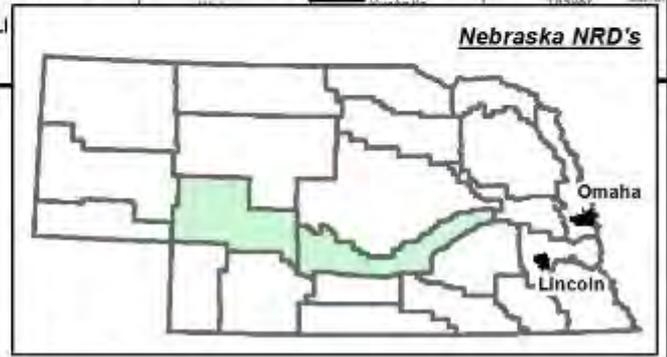
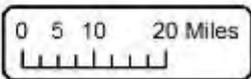
- **State Fund Pool**
 - **Ogallala Aquifer & Platte River Recovery (5 Years, 2015 – 2019)**
 - CPNRD, TPNRD, TMID, SCC, CDC
 - \$ 1.7 million
 - Application cutoff date = October 16, 2015

Detailed Project Location Map Ogalalla Aquifer & Platte River Recovery



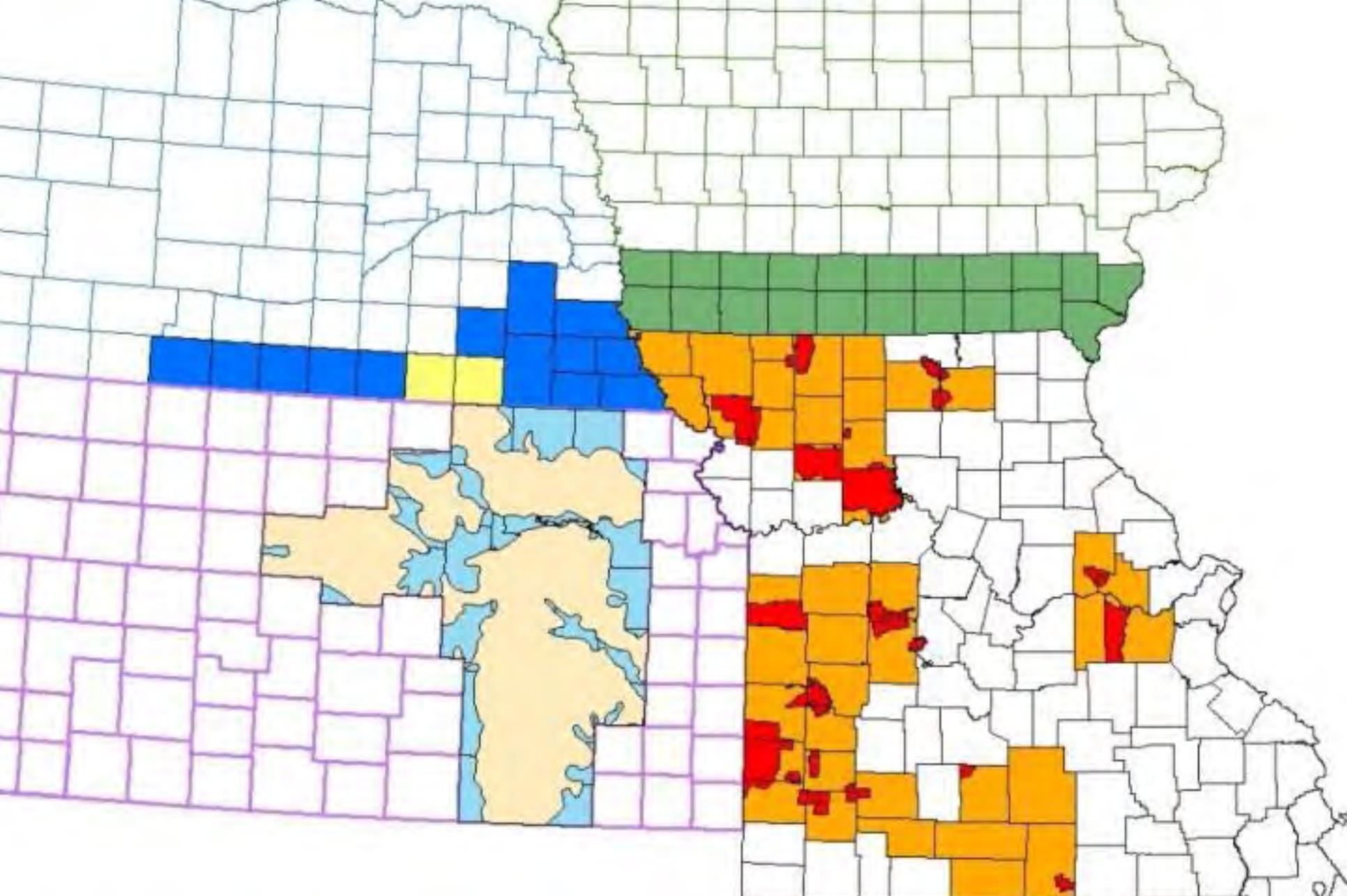
Legend

- Counties
- NRD Boundaries
- Phase 2 GW Quality Area
- Phase 3 GW Quality Area
- Platte R. Over Appropriated
- GWMA Declines - Concern
- GWMA Declines - Greatest Concern



FY15 RCPP Approvals - Nebraska

- **National Fund Pool**
 - **Regional Grassland Bird & Grazing Enhancement Initiative (5 years, 2015 – 2019)**
 - Missouri, Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa
 - \$ 885,000 (Nebraska allocation)
 - Application cutoff date = February 19, 2016



- | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
|  Kansas Focus Area |  Missouri Focus Area |  NE Quail Focus Areas |  Iowa Eligible Counties |
|  Kansas Eligible Counties |  Missouri Eligible Counties |  Nebraska Eligible Counties | |

2

FY16 RCPP Approvals - Nebraska

- **State Fund Pool**
 - **3 Proposals Approved**
 - **Cropland Cover for Soil Health and Wildlife – NGPC**
 - \$700,000
 - **Lower Elkhorn Water and Soil Conservation Project**
 - \$400,000
 - **Republican Basin Conservation Partnership – LRNRD**
 - \$2.1 million

FY16 RCPP Approvals - Nebraska

- **CCA Fund Pool**
 - **Honey Bee and Monarch Butterfly Ptshp**
 - Pheasants Forever - lead partner
 - 6 State area – IA, MN, MO, ND, SD, NE (lead)
 - \$ 8.3 million

FY16 RCPP Approvals - Nebraska

- **National Fund Pool**
 - **2 Proposals Approved**
 - **Midwest Ag Water Quality Ptnshp – Iowa Dept of Ag**
 - IA, IL, NE
 - \$9.5 million
 - **Innovative Tribal Conservation and GHG Mgt**
 - SD, NE, OK, NM, AK
 - \$1.8 million

RCPP APF Timeline – FY17

- **March 14, 2016:** Announcement of Program Funding (APF) through grants.gov.
- **May 10, 2016:** Pre-proposal applications due
- **Week of July 18, 2016:** Announcement of selected pre-proposals.
- **September 19, 2016:** Full proposal applications due.
- **December 2016:** Announcement of projects selected for funding.
- Once agreements are signed, partnership activities and obligations may begin.

Conservation Stewardship Program



CSP Acreage Limits

FY 2015 budget reduced funding

- 2015-1

New enrollment

7.741 million acres

less 7% RCPP

7.2 million acres (less newly enrolled land from
2015-1-Renewals)

- 2016-1-Renewals

No acreage cap

CStP - Eligibility Criteria

- Eligibility: 2 priority resource concerns at time of application, plus 1 at the end of contract
- Renewal Criteria: Be in compliance with current contract and by end of renewal period be able to meet 2 additional priority resource concerns or exceed 2 existing priority resource concerns

CStP Enhancement Activities

- Popular in Nebraska
 - Wildlife Friendly Fencing
 - Monitor Key Grazing Areas
 - Cover Crops to Break up Compaction
 - Wildlife Habitat
 - Advanced Nutrient Management
 - Water Quality/Water Quantity

Improved plant diversity for wildlife habitat and food in Lincoln County



Patch burn for wildlife in Lincoln County.



Wildlife friendly fence in Dawson County.





Forest Stand Improvement for Wildlife
in Otoe County.



Wildlife Escape Ramp in Lincoln County

Field Border in Colfax County



CSP - Water Quality & Quantity Enhancements

- WQT01 Irrigation system automation
- WQT03 Irrigation pumping plant evaluation
- WQT05 Remote monitoring and notification of irrigation pumping plant operation
- WQT07 Regional weather networks for irrigation scheduling
- WQT08 Decrease irrigation water quantity or conversion to non-irrigated crop production

CSP - Water Quality & Quantity Enhancements

- WQT09 - High level or advanced irrigation water management
- WQT10 - Center pivot irrigation system end gun removal
- WQT11 - Low energy precision application (LEPA) irrigation

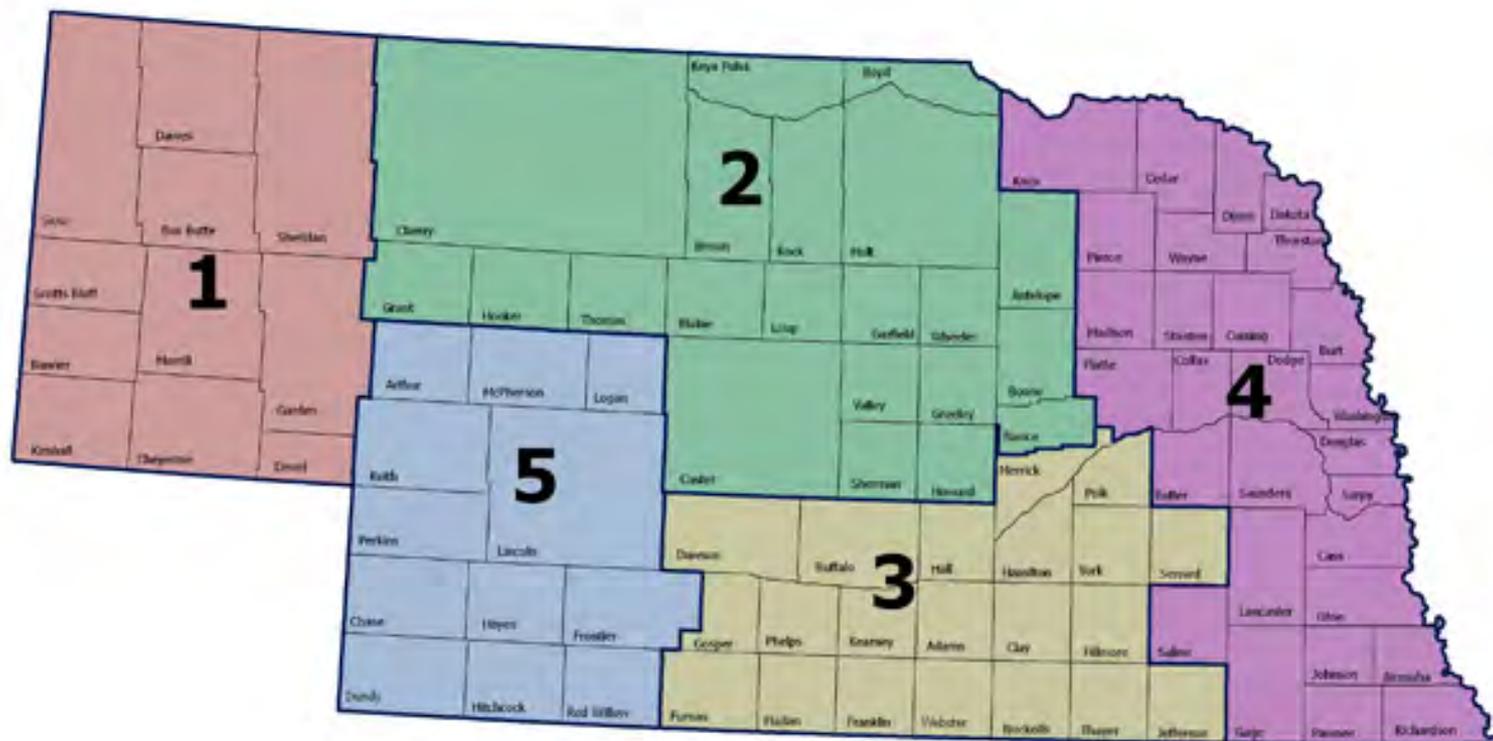
CSP & CStP Contracts - Nebraska

- Contract Total = 2710
- Contract Acres = 5,237,884
- Annual Payments = \$58.2 million

Future Signups

- CSP is currently being overhauled
 - Conservation Measurement Tool (CMT) discontinued
 - Enhancements will be more closely tied to Practices. The benefits must be above the Conservation Practice Standard (CPS)
 - Separate payments for existing and additional activities
 - Base payment for maintenance of existing system
 - Regional payment schedule for additional activities
- Goal is to make program simpler and more transparent
- Rollout planned for 2017 general signup

Ranking Pools



Ranking Areas: Area 1 Area 2 Area 3 Area 4 Area 5

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program



FRPP



GRP



WRP

ACEP – Agricultural Conservation Easement Program

- ACEP has 2 components
- Agricultural Land Easement Component (ALE)
 - Combines purposes of FRPP and GRP
 - Functions like FRPP
- Wetland Reserve Easement Component (WRE)
 - Retains purpose and function of WRP

A CEP – Agricultural Land Easement (ALE)

ACEP-ALE - Implementation

- FY 16 ALE Allocation = \$1.3 million.
- FY 16 Overview of ALE-AL and ALE-GSS applications
 - ALE-GSS Applications Received = 2
 - ALE-GSS Applications Approved in FY 16 = 2
 - ALE Applications Received = 1 (Has Prime, unique, or other production soil)
 - ALE Applications Approved = 1
 - \$1,178,720 Request Federal NRCS Share

ACEP - Wetland Reserve Easement (WRE)



Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE)

- Enrollment Options
 - Permanent Easement
 - Reserved Grazing Rights Easements
 - Must be in a landform where grazing can sustain habitat
 - 30-year Easement
 - 30 year contract with Indian Tribes
 - ✓ *Note: WRE eliminates 10-year restoration cost-share only agreements.*

FY2016 WRE Applications - Allocations

- WRE Applications Received = 59
- WRE Applications Pre-Approved = Pending
- WRE Advisory Allocation = \$ 3.3 million.
- WREP Advisory Allocation=\$1.7 million
- WREP Nebraska Community Foundation Contribution=\$425,000
 - Includes funding for Restoration, Due Diligence, and Closing

FY 2015 WRE Agreement to Purchase

- 4 Landowners signed their agreement to Purchase a Conservation Easement. Planned closing date 9/30/2016
- \$2 million approved in 4 agreements for easement payment.
- FY2015 Landowner Agreements will have their Boundary Legally Surveyed starting April 4th 2016. Surveyor has 70 days to complete all 4
- FY2016 Agreement to Purchases will be sent out in May 2016

FY2016 WRE/ WREP/ ALE Applications

- Applies to all ACEP Participants and Partners
- Application cutoff - January 2016
- Ranking in the Spring of 2016
- Agreements to be signed by July 2016
- AWMA/GARC for FY2017 in place by Mid-Summer

Questions?



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