

RCPP

Regional Conservation Partnership Program

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

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REGIONAL CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM (RCPP)

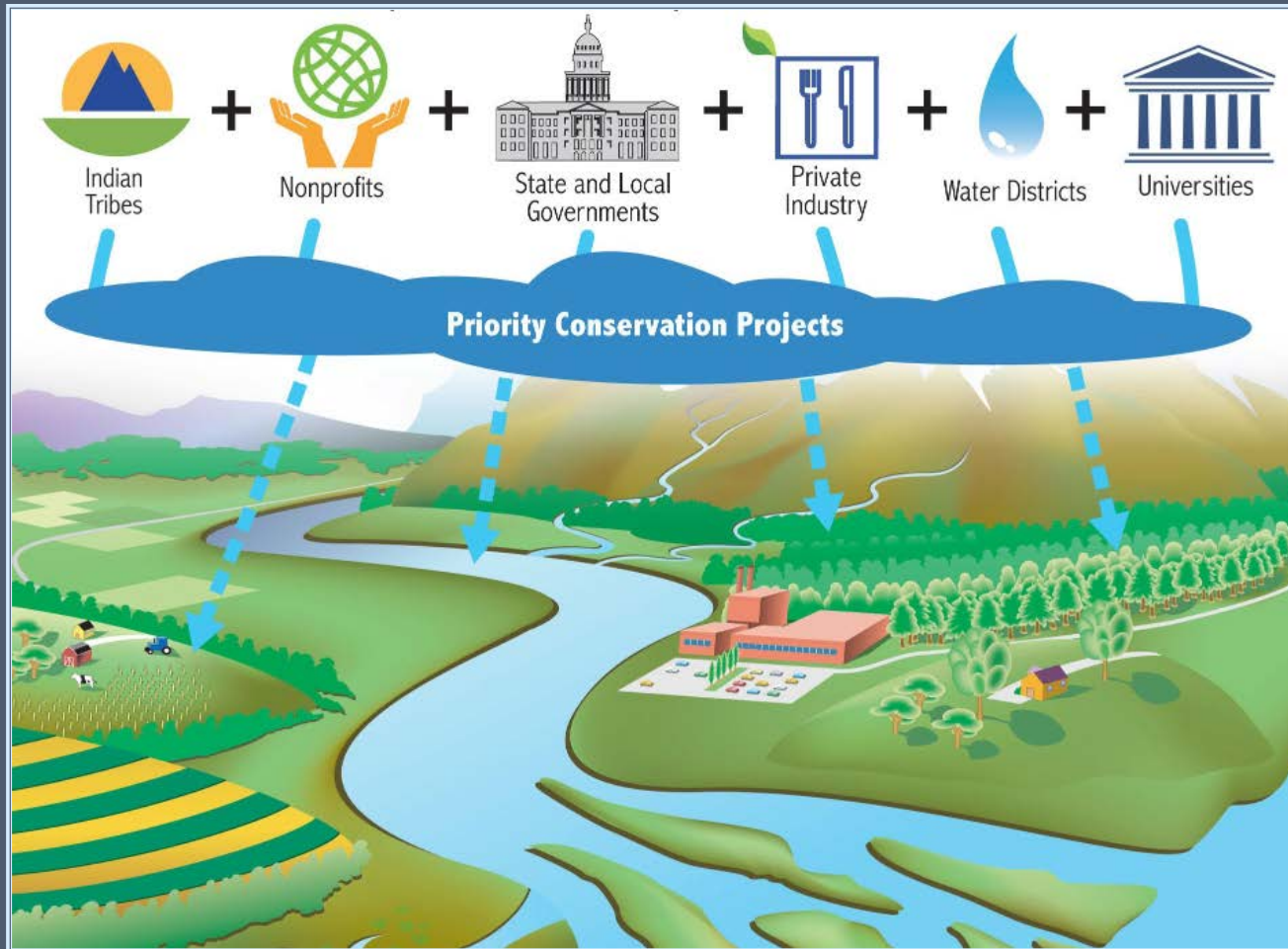
- A new program that mobilizes partnerships to multiply investments and reach common conservation goals



RCPP

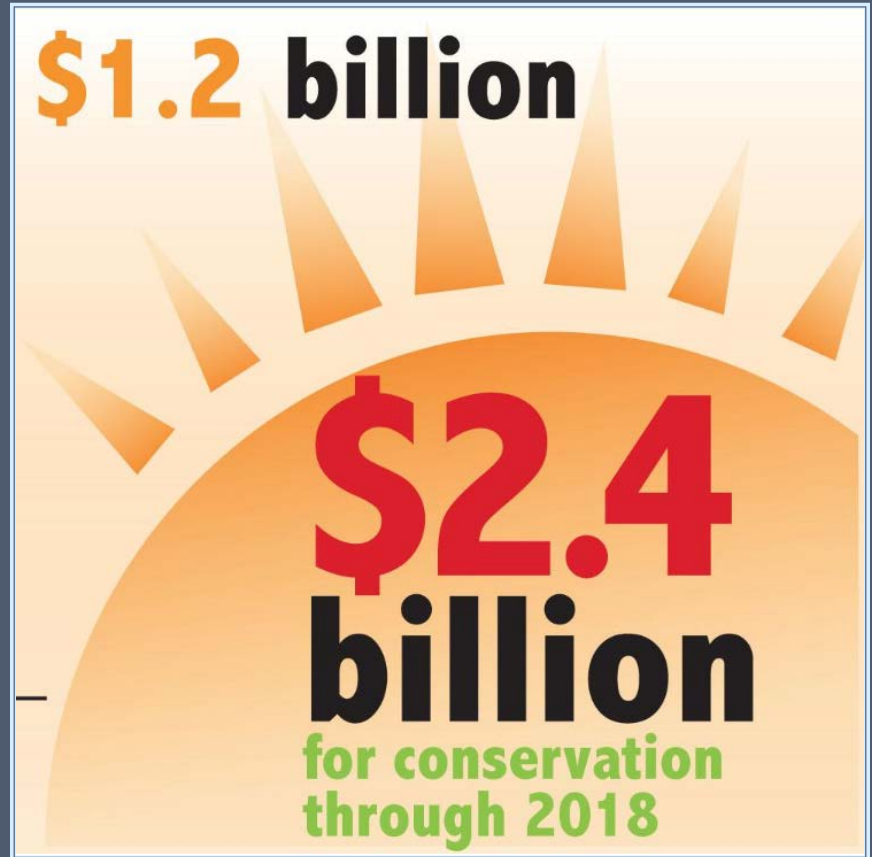
- A new 2014 Farm Bill conservation program:
 - Furthers the conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of soil, water, wildlife on a regional scale
 - Encourages partners to cooperate with producers
 - Provides assistance through Partnership agreements, Program contracts or easement agreements
 - Combines the purposes and functions of four previous regional programs:
 - AWEF, CBWP, CCPI, Great Lakes Program
 - Utilizes one new and three existing programs:
 - ACEP(new), EQIP, CSP, HFRP

RCPP



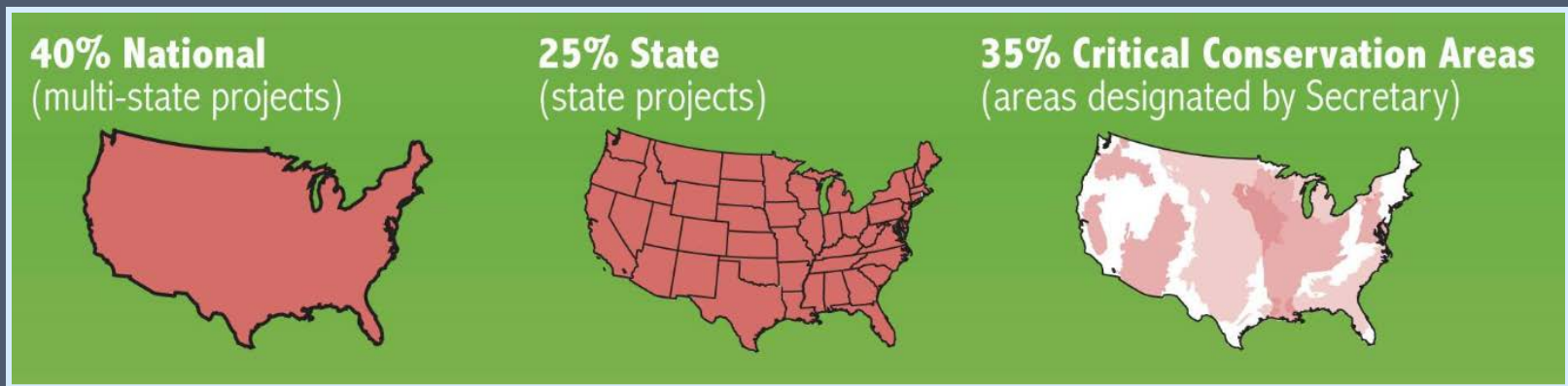
RCPP FUNDING

- \$100 million each year directly from the Farm Bill
- PLUS, 7% of funds from the four covered programs reserved annually
- Over five years, USDA plans to invest up to \$1.2 billion with partners matching funding that could be as much as \$2.4 billion for conservation



RCPP FUNDING

- Funding Allocations
 - 40% for projects in national competitive process
 - 25% for projects in state competitive process
 - 35% for projects in critical conservation areas



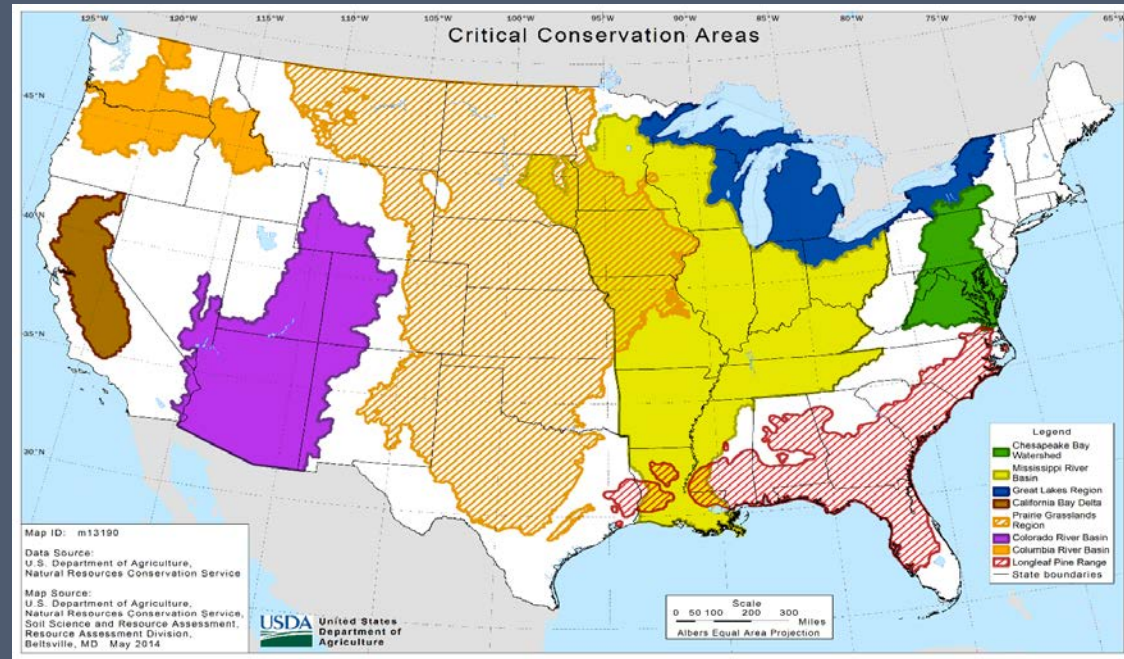
RCPP CCA's

CRITICAL CONSERVATION AREAS ARE:

- Designated by Secretary of Agriculture
- Areas:
 - With significant agricultural production
 - Benefiting from water quality or quantity improvement
 - Containing landowners and producers that need to meet or avoid negatively impacting regulations

RCPP CCA's

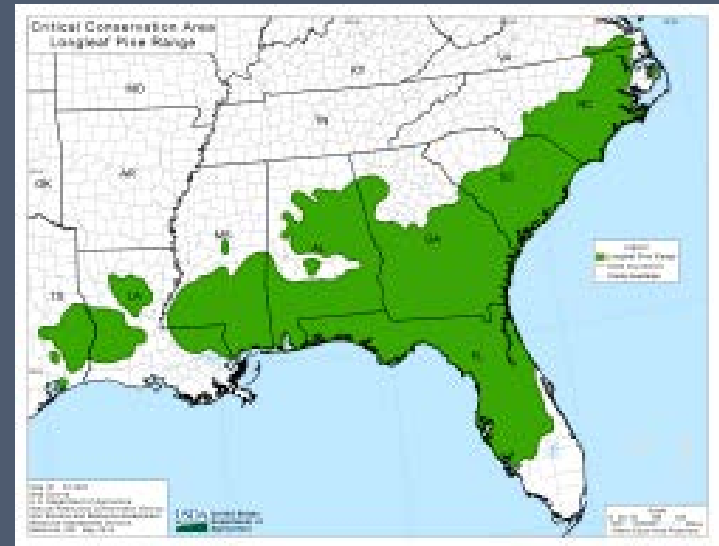
- Great Lakes Region
- Chesapeake Bay Watershed
- Mississippi River Basin
- Longleaf Pine Range
- Columbia River Basin
- California Bay Delta
- Prairie Grasslands Region
- Colorado River Basin



RCPP CCA'S – LONGLEAF PINE AREA

Resource Concern Priorities

- **Water Quality Degradation:** Excess nutrients and pesticides in surface and ground waters; excessive sediment in surface waters
- **Degraded Plant Condition:** Undesirable plant productivity and health; excessive plant pest pressure
- **Inadequate Habitat for Fish and Wildlife:** Habitat degradation



RCPP in GEORGIA

- PRIORITY RESOURCE CONCERNS IN GEORGIA:
 - Excess/insufficient water
 - Inadequate habitat for fish and wildlife
 - Inefficient energy use
 - Livestock production limitation
 - Water quality degradation



RCPP SIGN-UP

- The announcement for program funding can be found on **grants.gov**. More information on the APF and the program can be found at nrcs.usda.gov

The screenshot shows the Grants.gov search results page. The top navigation bar includes links for CONTACT US, MANAGE SUBSCRIPTIONS, REGISTER, and LOGIN. A search bar at the top right contains the text "Grant Opportunities" and a "GO" button. Below the navigation bar, the "SEARCH GRANTS" tab is selected. The main content area is titled "SEARCH GRANTS" and includes a "BASIC SEARCH CRITERIA" section with input fields for "Keyword(s)", "Funding Opp #", and "CFDA Number", along with a "SEARCH" button. To the right of the search criteria, there is a filter for "AGENCY: [X] All Department of Agriculture". Below the search criteria, the "OPPORTUNITY STATUS" section shows "Open (50)" and "Closed (47)" options. The "SORT BY" dropdown is set to "Open Date (Descending)", and the "DATE RANGE" dropdown is set to "All Available". The results section shows "1 - 25 OF 50 MATCHING RESULTS:" and a table with the following data:

Funding Opportunity #	Opportunity Title	Agency	Open Date	Close Date
USDA-NRCS-NHQ-RCPP-14-01	Regional Conservation Partnership Program	Natural Resources Conservation Service	05/27/2014	07/14/2014

- Pre-proposals are due July 14, and full proposals are due September 26

RCPP PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS

- NRCS will conduct a competitive process to select applications for partnership agreements
- NRCS will make public the criteria used in evaluating



RCPP PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS

- **Partnership agreements may not exceed 5 years;** however, NRCS may extend the agreement 1 time for up to 12 months
- The partnership agreement defines the scope of the project, including:
 - Eligible activities to be implemented
 - Potential agricultural or nonindustrial private forest operation affected
 - Local, state, multi-state or other geographic area covered
 - Planning, outreach, implementation and assessment to be conducted

RCPP PARTNER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Contributing a significant portion of the overall costs
- Providing outreach and education to eligible producers for potential participation in the project
- Acting on a landowner's/producer's behalf, if requested by the landowners or producer
- Leveraging financial or technical assistance provided by NRCS with additional funds to help achieve project objectives
- Conducting and providing an assessment of the project costs and conservation effects

RCPP ELIGIBILITY

- Eligible land includes:
 - cropland, grassland, rangeland, pastureland, nonindustrial forest land, other land incidental to agricultural production (wetlands, buffers etc.)
- Eligible partners may include:
 - agricultural producer associations, silvicultural producer associations, groups of producers, State or unit of local governments, Indian tribes, farmer cooperatives, water district, irrigation district, rural water districts, municipal water or wastewater treatment entities, conservation driven nongovernmental organizations, institutions of higher education

RCPP PROPOSALS

- Deliver high percentages of applied conservation to address conservation priorities or local, State, regional, or national conservation initiatives
- Significantly leverage non-Federal financial and technical resources and coordinate with other local, State, regional, or national efforts
- Provide innovation in conservation methods and delivery
- Assist producers in meeting or avoiding the need for a natural resource regulatory requirement

RCPP ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

- Water quality restoration or enhancement projects, including nutrient management and sediment reduction
- Water quality conservation, restoration or enhancement projects relating to surface water groundwater resources including;
 - the conversion of irrigated cropland to the production of less water-intensive commodities, dry land farming
 - irrigation system improvement
- Drought mitigation
- Flood prevention

RCPP ELIGIBLE PRACTICES

- Water retention
- Air Quality improvement
- Habitat conservation, restoration, and enhancement
- Erosion control and sediment reduction
- Forest restoration
- Easement acquisition activities associated with wetland restoration and protection or the preservation of working agricultural lands.

RCPP ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Allows the Secretary to waive AGI if needed to fulfill purposes of the program
- Allows adjustments to discretionary rules of covered program with Secretary's approval, if requested by partner
- No funding may be used to cover partner administrative costs

RCPP

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