



RCPP-EQIP Oconomowoc River Watershed Plan of Operations for Fiscal Year 2016

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) offers financial assistance to agricultural producers to implement on-farm conservation practices. Eligible land is determined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and is based on an identified resource concern. Eligible producers may apply for financial assistance for conservation practices that will address the identified resource concerns.

This plan and process document will be updated at a later date to include details on the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) opportunities for FY16 in this watershed.

An outreach campaign will be conducted during the fall of 2015 to potential applicants. It will focus on conservation planning in preparation for a late winter application period. Using a landowner list provided by the lead partner, a mailing will provide a brochure with more information on how to participate. Follow-up phone calls and farm visits should also be conducted to increase interest and application numbers.

Eligible Watershed Area:

Producers located within the Oconomowoc River Watershed are eligible to participate in the Oconomowoc River RCPP-EQIP sign-up. The conservation practice(s) identified in the application must be located within the watershed to be eligible for financial assistance consideration through the RCPP-EQIP sign-up.

In order to be eligible for funding, over 50% of a field, pasture, or woodland must be within the boundaries of the watershed.

Eligible Practices and Payment Rates:

See the documents posted on the WI NRCS website for the list of eligible practices and payment rates for the Oconomowoc River RCPP-EQIP.

Application Period:

EQIP applications are accepted on a continuous basis throughout the year. The FY2016 Oconomowoc River RCPP-EQIP batching date (application deadline) is March 4, 2016. All eligible applications received by the close of business March 4, 2016 will be processed using a screening tool to assign a high, medium, or low priority. Applications will then be further evaluated and ranked, as available funding allows. If sufficient funding is still available after the first signup period, additional application signup periods may be announced.

Interested agricultural producers may apply in person at the USDA Service Centers for their county within the watershed. Applicants may also request EQIP assistance by telephone, e-mail, or letter. The USDA Service Center locator can be found at this [link](#).

Fund Pools:

The following table identifies the fund pools established for RCPP-EQIP applications.

Oconomowoc River Watershed Water Quality

Producers applying for financial assistance available will be competing for funds within this fund pool.

Applications for Conservation Activity Plans, if applicable, will be single practice, stand-alone applications.

Screening:

All applications will be screened using the EQIP 2016 Application Screening Tool posted on the WI NRCS web site and assigned a High, Medium, or Low priority based on their screening status as of March 4, 2016.

Ranking:

Ranking of the applications will be done according to the ranking system posted on the WI NRCS web site for the Oconomowoc River RCPP-EQIP. High priority applications will be ranked first, followed by Medium priority, if funding allows. Low priority applications will not be ranked. All rankings will be conducted in ProTracts. In the event of application ranking score ties, the application that has the higher tracking code (i.e. random number generated in ProTracts) will receive funding priority.

Funding:

NRCS will allocate the available Oconomowoc River RCPP-EQIP funds based on the numerical ranking system set forth on the WI NRCS website. Applications will be selected for plan development and contracted in ranked order according to Priority and ranking score, as funds allow. If there are insufficient funds available to fund an application, applications not selected for contracting will be deferred to the next application ranking period.