



## Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

### Investing in Rhode Island - 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 two in Rhode Island. 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.

### Enhancing Soil Health in the Ocean State

Proposed NRCS Investment: \$600,000 (State)

Lead Partner: Rhode Island State Conservation Committee (RISCC)

Number of Partners: 6

Participating State(s): Rhode Island

Healthy soils are the cornerstone to sustainable food production and clean waters, and this project intends to convey the importance of healthy soils while assisting RI agricultural producers with the first steps toward improving their farm's soil health. Partners will develop criteria for Soil Health Management Conservation Activity Plans (SHMcaps) and choose two pilot farms. SHMcaps will include criteria that standardizes a format for summarizing results from the farm's soil health testing, identifies various systems of BMPs that will improve the farm's soil & plant health, reduce soil erosion and improve water quality and provides implementation schedules that meet the farm's objectives. Implementation of the SHMcap will resolve pinpointed soil health limitations and ultimately enhance farm production and soil function, while improving water quality throughout the state.

### 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.

