



Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

Investing in Tennessee - 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 Tennessee. 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.

Upper Clinch-Powell Watershed Partnership

Proposed NRCS Investment: \$4.5 million (National)

Lead Partner: The Nature Conservancy – Clinch Valley Program

Number of Partners: 16

Participating State(s): Tennessee & Virginia (**lead state**)

The globally important Upper Clinch-Powell River Watershed, located in the Appalachian Mountains of Virginia and Tennessee, is a leading national hotspot for biodiversity and imperiled species sustaining over 40 varieties of rare mussels and supporting at least 129 native types of fish. Surrounding the rivers is a rural landscape that includes forests, coal mining areas, sensitive caves which are critical to groundwater, working farms, and small Appalachian towns struggling to remain economically viable. To protect and sustain this region, The Nature Conservancy and partners formed the Clinch-Powell Clean Rivers Initiative (CPCRI) to document and address ecosystem stressors including excess sediments and nutrients, metals, dissolved solids, pesticides and persistent organics. This project is designed to improve water quality and aquatic habitat by developing a local working group for resource identification and bmp prioritization, designing a GIS-based ranking system to prioritize RCPP project investments, implementing agricultural and mining BMPs in biologically critical areas, and assessing the positive impacts of these BMPs on water quality.

West Tennessee Floodplain & Wetland Restoration

Proposed NRCS Investment: \$934,000 (State)

Lead Partner: West Tennessee River Basin Authority (WTRBA)

Number of Partners: 6

Participating State(s): Tennessee

Sediment from agricultural production and in-stream sources is west Tennessee's largest freshwater pollutant and has contributed to large-scale ecological degradation and economic loss. This project addresses water quality, aquatic and riverine habitat resource concerns in several watersheds located in five counties of west Tennessee. The goal of this project is to measurably improve the water quality and ecological integrity of the identified watersheds through implementation of NRCS soil health initiative practices, grade stabilization structures, riparian forest buffer, sediment basins, wetland enhancement and wetland restoration.

