



Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

Investing in Texas - 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 three in Texas. 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.

Fort Hood Private Lands Conservation Initiative

Proposed NRCS Investment: \$700,000 (State)

Lead Partner: Compatible Lands Foundation (CLF)

Number of Partners: 1

Participating State(s): Texas

The Fort Hood Private Lands Conservation Initiative is a partnership between the CLF and the United States Army to preserve 22,000 acres of grazing lands adjacent to Fort Hood Army Base in Coryell County, Texas, through the acquisition of permanent conservation easements. Through this program, grazing lands will be preserved, wildlife habitat for such species as the Golden Cheeked Warbler and Monarch Butterfly will be protected, and water quality and quantity in the Trinity Aquifer will be protected by the conservation of important recharge lands. Additionally, military training occurring at Fort Hood will not be disrupted from incompatible land uses on adjacent properties.

Improving Working Lands for Monarch Butterflies

Proposed NRCS Investment: \$6 million (National)

Lead Partner: National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

Number of Partners: 12

Participating State(s): Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas (**lead state**) & Wisconsin

Our partnership will restore, manage and conserve wildlife habitat for monarch butterflies on agricultural and tribal lands using four main strategies: conservation planning and assessment; habitat improvement and best management practices; building an adequate seed supply for milkweed and nectar plants; and, enhancing organizational coordination and capacity. To provide the greatest conservation outcomes, the project will focus work within two NRCS Critical Conservation Areas: Prairie Grasslands Region and Mississippi River Basin. Targeted areas will be identified through a US Geological Survey-led initiative examining fine-scale opportunities for the restoration of milkweed and other pollinator plants. This project will contribute to national goals in terms of habitat and increase the number of monarch butterflies. This in turn will represent the best opportunity to avoid future regulations related to monarch butterflies from being imposed on farmers and ranchers in the future.



Limited Applied Irrigation Assistance Program

Proposed NRCS Investment: \$2 million (State)

Lead Partner: High Plains Underground Water District

Number of Partners: 16

Participating State(s): Texas

This project will address inefficient use of irrigation and moisture management concerns within the Ogallala Aquifer by encouraging agricultural water users to leave water in the ground through adoption of on-farm water conservation strategies, improved irrigation efficiency or conversion to non-irrigated production for the life of the project. The proposed project will build on existing programs such as EQIP, CSP and AWEP to address water conservation needs in the proposed region and establish an economic incentive for producers to participate in the project. Additionally, by leveraging state and local cost-share for the purchase of equipment, this project will result in measured data on applied irrigation water and allow for producer compensation based on actual on-farm water savings.





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