



Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

Investing in Vermont - 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 Vermont. 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.

Memphremagog Long-term Water Quality Partnership

Proposed NRCS Investment: \$674,000 (State)

Lead Partner: Orleans County Natural Resources Conservation District

Number of Partners: 10

Participating State(s): Vermont

With an emphasis on target sub-watersheds where water quality sampling indicates significant contributions of phosphorus loading from agricultural lands to the phosphorus-impaired Lake Memphremagog and a nutrient-impaired stream within the Tomifobia River watershed, partners will plan and implement key conservation practices on agricultural land to improve water quality. The project will implement NRCS-approved practices on farms, focusing on NMPs, smaller BMP production area practices and field and pasture practices to address water quality, soil erosion and soil quality decline. Success will be evaluated using multiple performance measures including: water sampling results, NMPs completed, practices installed, phosphorus reductions per practice, acreage treated and social measures—such as changes in farmer behavior and establishment of an ongoing farmer workgroup.

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.

