



United States Department of Agriculture



Wisconsin  
Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service



Wisconsin Council on Forestry  
May 18, 2022

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Resources  
Conservation  
Service

[nrcs.usda.gov/](https://nrcs.usda.gov/)

# NRCS Funding Opportunities



Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities

Farm Bill Programs

- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
- Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

NRCS Wisconsin Agreements



## Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act)



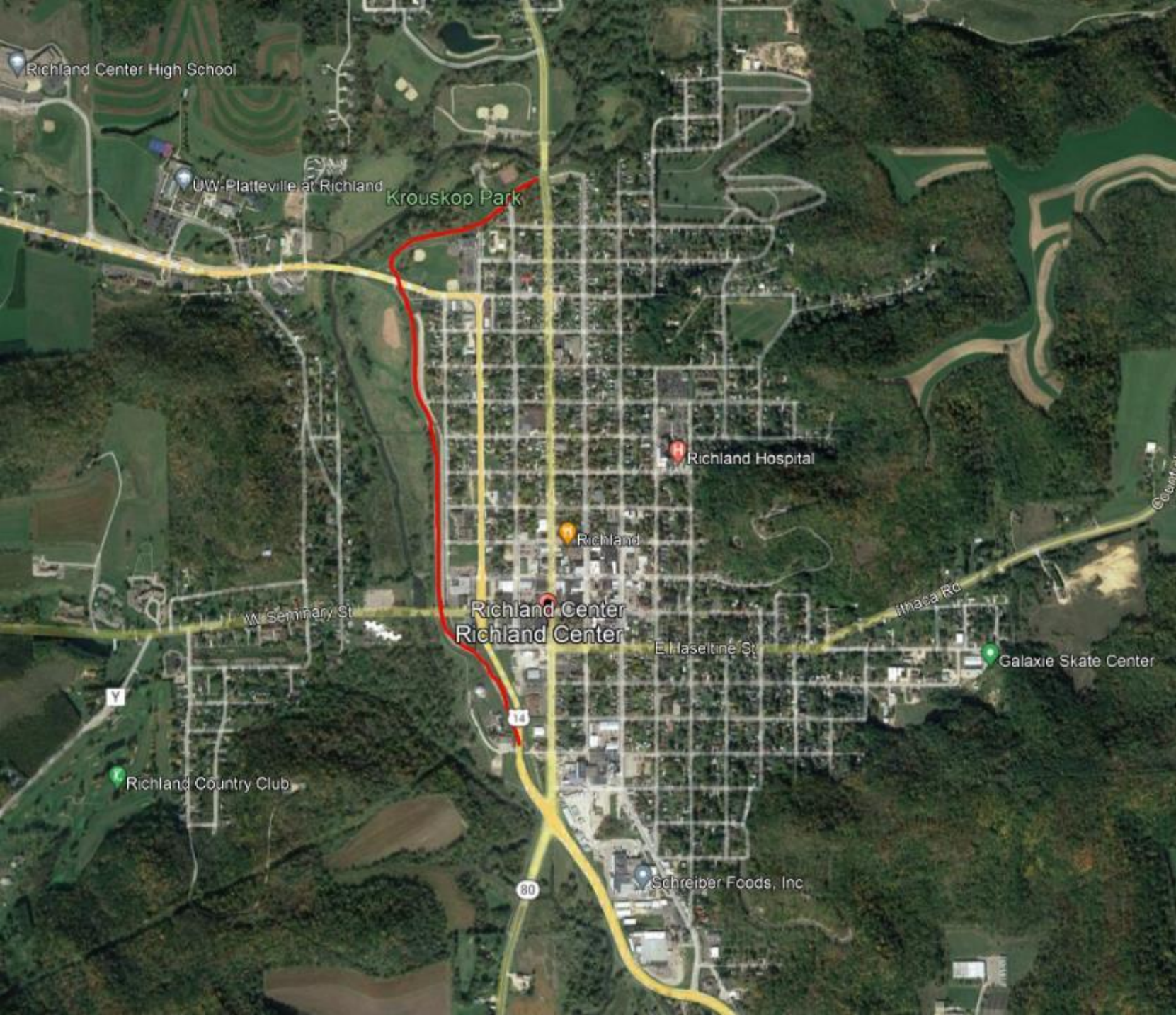
Provides \$918 million (nationwide) for NRCS Watershed Programs that address new, ongoing, emergent, and relief to all communities to address watershed resource concerns.

- \$300M **Emergency Watershed Protection Program**  
(in addition to disaster-specific appropriations)
- \$118M **Watershed Rehabilitation Program**  
(in addition to \$10M annually through normal appropriations)
- \$500M **Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations Program**  
(in addition to \$175M annually through normal appropriations since 2017)





Bad Axe Dam No. 11, Springville Branch of Bad Axe River, Vernon Co. near Newton, WI



# Flood Control Levee along Pine River Richland Center, WI

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# Watershed Program

## Objectives:

1. Prevent damage from erosion, floodwater, and sediment
2. Further conservation, development, utilization & disposal of water
3. Improve proper utilization of land



# Watershed Program



## Authorized Purposes by Statute:

1. Flood Prevention or Flood Damage Reduction
2. Watershed Protection
3. Public Recreation
4. Public Fish and Wildlife
5. Agricultural Water Management
6. Water Quality Management



# Watershed Program



**Project ideas need to align with one or more authorized purposes:**

## Need

## Authorized Purpose

Dams, dikes, flood bypass channels,  
house relocations, and flood-proofing



Flood Prevention

Land treatment systems (NHCP practices)



Watershed Protection

Groundwater recharge basins, rural water lines,  
irrigation canal lining or canal-to-pipeline conversions,  
rehab & improvement of drainage district infrastructure



Ag Water Management





# Watershed Program



**Project ideas need to align with one or more authorized purposes:**

## Need

## Authorized Purpose

**Improve recreational potential of water resource areas:**

Picnic areas/shelters, sanitary facilities, fishing piers, parking areas, swimming beaches, potable water, trails/walkways/access roads



Public Recreation

**Fisheries and wildlife development projects:**

Water level control structures, fish ladders, fish passage, breeding & nesting features, stream/river/wetland restoration



Public Fish & Wildlife

**Water quality improvement projects:**

Stormwater runoff treatment/retention systems



Water Quality



# Watershed Program



- **All conservation practices and measures that can be done under EQIP, RCPP, WRE, CSP should be done under these programs.**

Farm Bill practices fall under a programmatic EA which substantially simplifies the time and effort to plan and implement a project.

- **Watershed projects exceed jurisdiction/capacity of individual landowners.**

Collaboration is necessary with local gov't, and Federal/state cooperating agencies, and Tribes.

- **Watershed projects require a Watershed Project Plan– EA/EIS**

Watershed project plans typically run \$500K - \$2M

- **Projects must demonstrate an economic benefit to the general public.**

Projects must be proven economically, environmentally, and socially defensible and technically sound. Benefit / Cost Ratio > 1



# Watershed Program



## Statutory Requirements:

1. Project must have a Sponsor that meets basic eligibility requirements:
  - Subdivision of state government, power of eminent domain, taxation authority
  - Ability to be a fiduciary and administer engineering/construction contracts
2. NRCS funding share < \$25 M
3. Agriculture (including rural communities) > 20% of the total benefits
4. Watershed area < 250,000 acres (390 sq.mi.)
5. Single structure storage capacity < 12,500 acre-feet
6. Total project storage capacity < 25,000 acre-feet



# Watershed Program



## Sponsor requirements:

- Acquisition of real property rights to construct the project and retain control of the property for the evaluated life (50 or 100 years).
- Acquisition of permits and licenses to construct, operate, and maintain
- Administration of construction contracts
- Commitment for cost share funds
- Commitment to fund O&M through the evaluated life  
may include tax levees, inspection costs, repairs, legal defensibility, tax implications, and emergency action plans.



# Watershed Program



## Acquisition of real property rights includes:

- Purchase of land or easements to construct projects.
- Changes of existing telephone, power, gas, water, and sewer/sanitary lines or other utilities.
- Construction of new roads and changes of existing public/private roads, or railroad bridges, culverts, and other crossings, including approaches.
- Administrative services to change or acquire those rights, and mitigate for fish and wildlife habitat losses.



# Watershed Program



## Target Timelines:

- |                                                |                |
|------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| ➤ Preliminary Investigation Feasibility Report | 6 months       |
| ➤ PLAN – EA/EIS                                | 18 - 24 months |
| ➤ Design                                       | 18 - 24 months |
| ➤ Construction (Watershed/Rehab)               | 12 - 24 months |

\* after funds received and A&E/contract awarded



# Watershed Program



## NRCS Cost Share %:

	Construction	Tech Assistance
1. Preliminary Investigation Feasibility Report	--	100%
2. Watershed Project Plan – EA/EIS	--	100%
3. Construction Assistance		
▪ Flood Prevention	100%	
▪ Watershed Protection	50-75%	
▪ Fish/Wildlife/Public Recreation	50%	
▪ Ag Water Management	75%	
▪ Municipal & Industrial Water Supply	50%	
▪ Water Quality		determined by Sec. of Ag
4. Real Property Rights, O&M	0%	0%

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# Watershed Program



## Process (continuous sign-up w/periodic batching & ranking):

1. Initial determination that project idea is compatible w/ program ([WI NRCS](#))
2. Preliminary Investigation Feasibility Report ([application for funding](#))
3. Watershed Project Plan - EA/EIS ([application for funding](#))
4. Design ([application for funding](#))
5. Construction ([application for funding](#))





# Watershed Program



## More Information:

- National Watershed Manual

<https://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/viewerFS.aspx?hid=36702>

- National Watershed Handbook

<https://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/viewerFS.aspx?hid=35135>

- Steve Becker, NRCS State Conservation Engineer

[steve.becker@usda.gov](mailto:steve.becker@usda.gov); 608-662-4422 x234





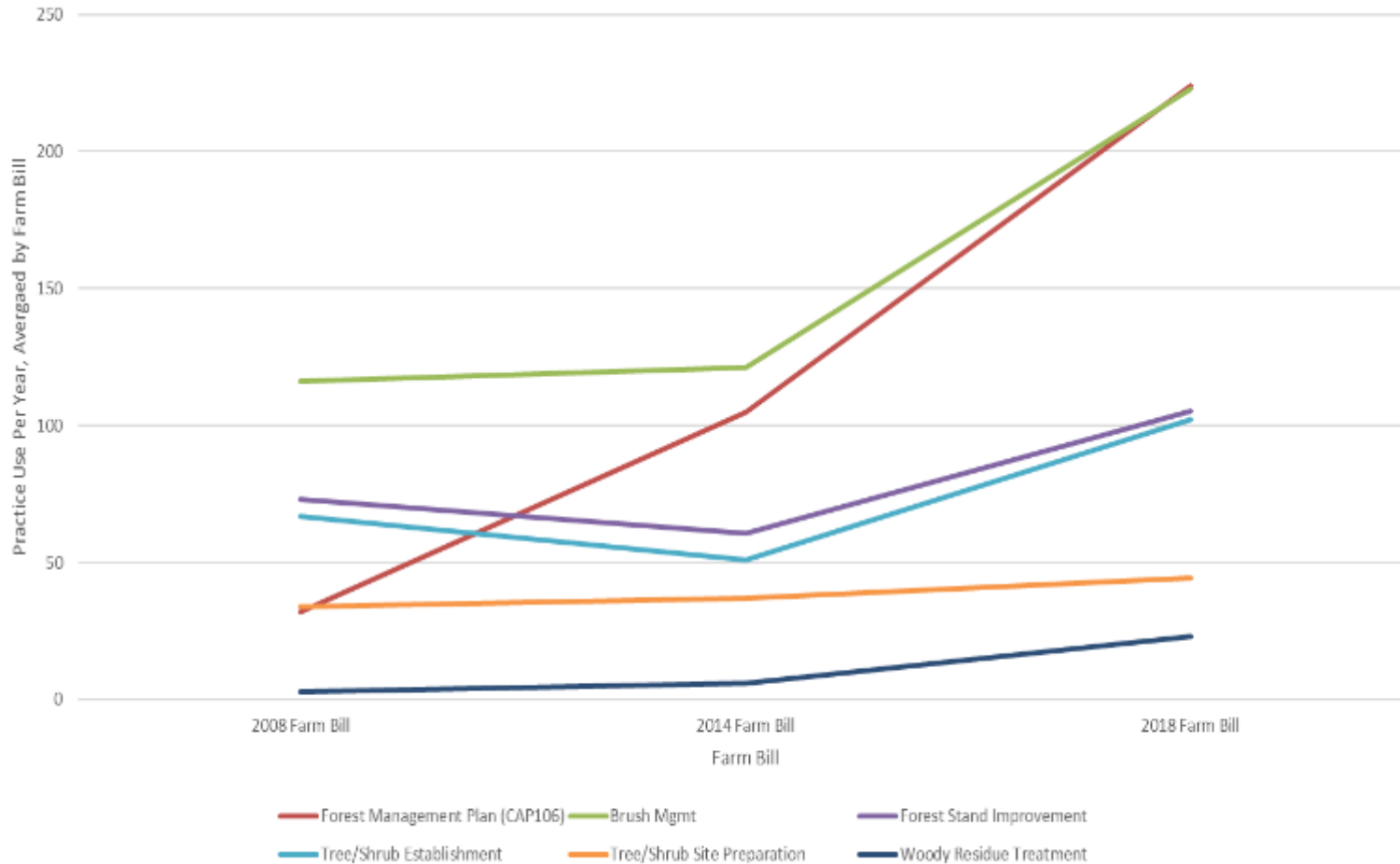
## Farm Bill Programs

- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
- Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)



# EQIP Forestry Practice Use By Farm Bill

WI NRCS Forestry EQIP Practice Use by Farm Bill

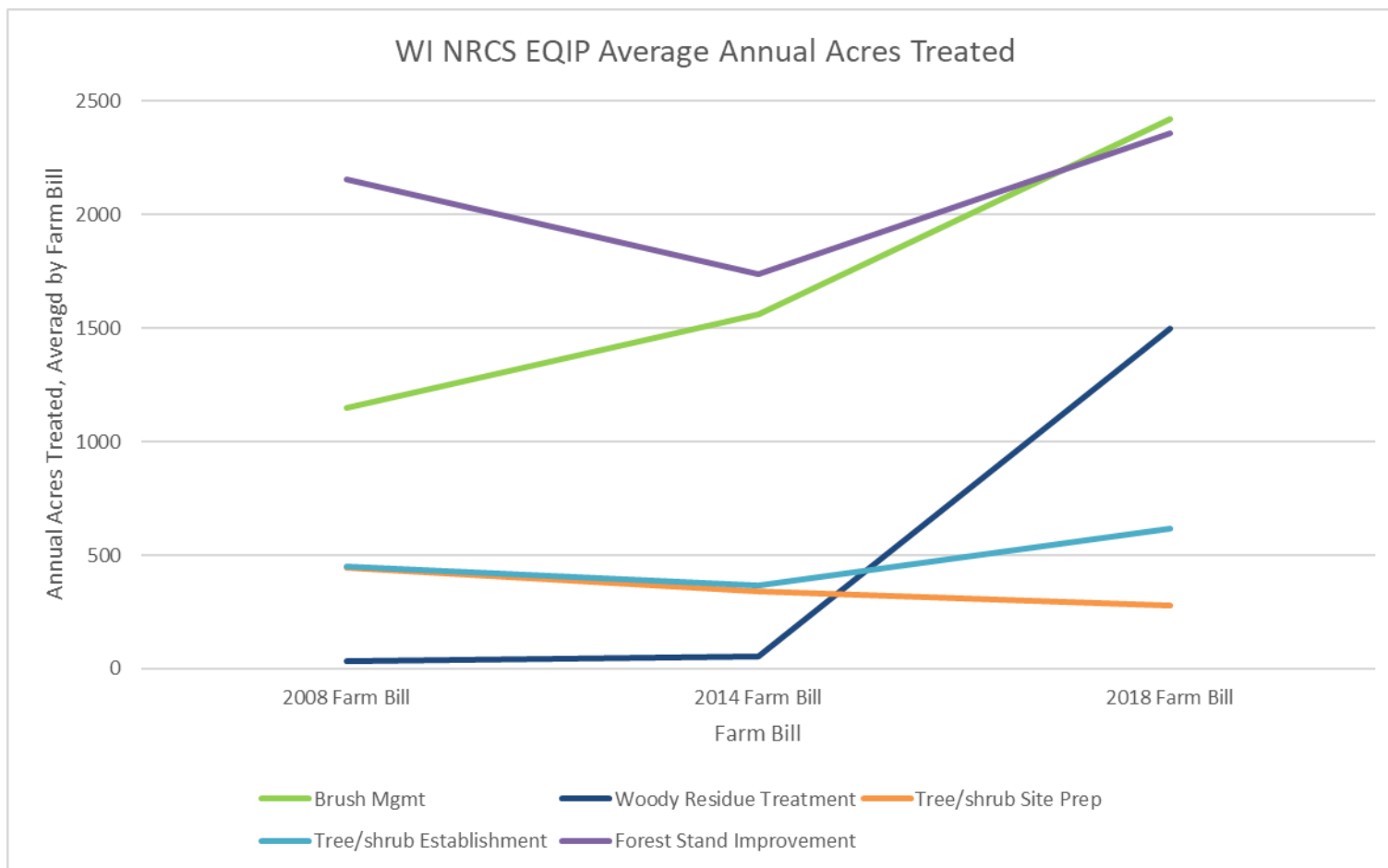


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# EQIP Forestry Acres Treated By Farm Bill



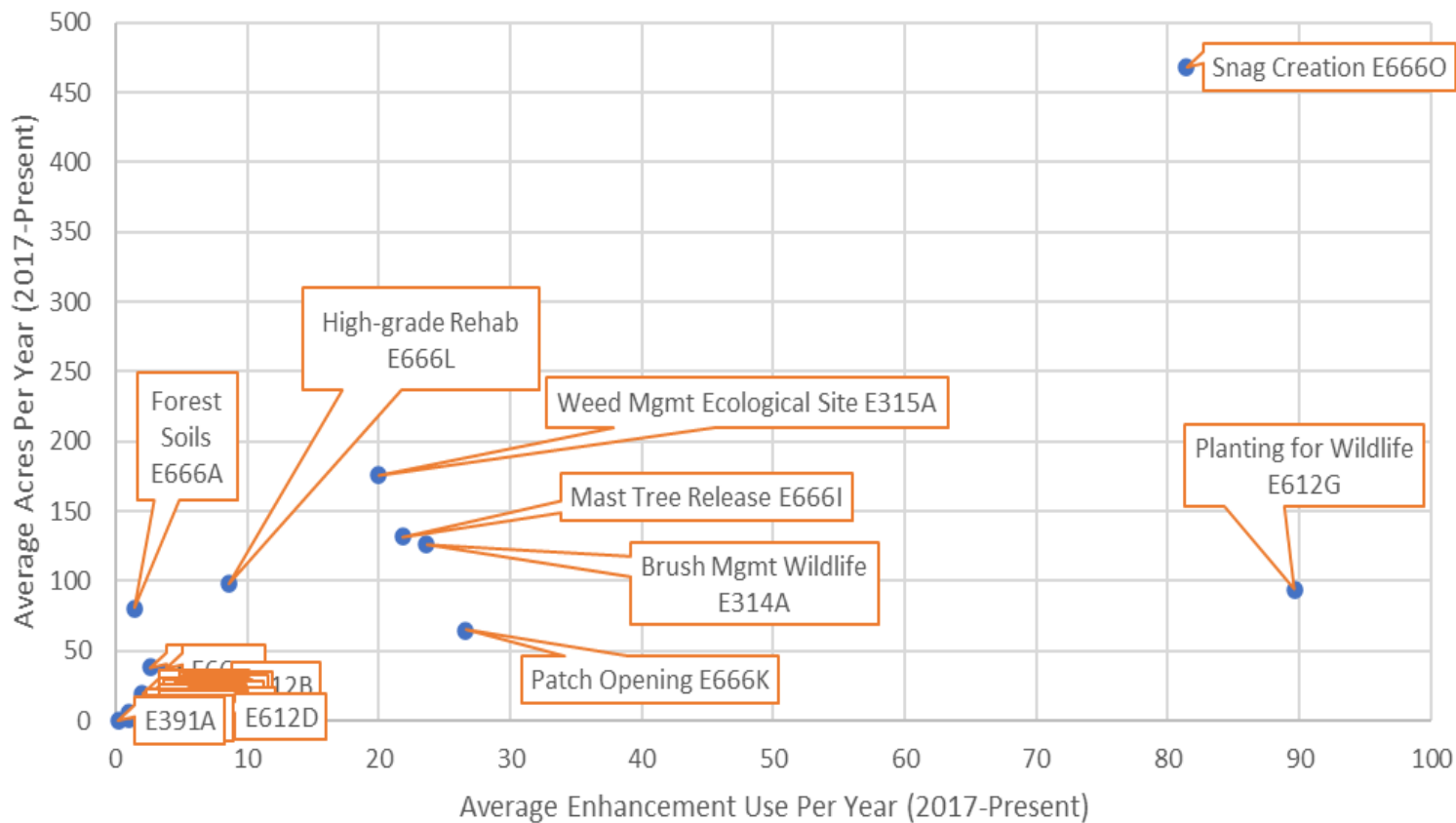
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# CSP Forestry Enhancement Use

WI NRCS Forestry CSP Enhancement Use



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Up to approximately \$1 billion will be made available for the **Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities** projects through this funding opportunity, which will build markets and invest in America's climate-smart farmers, ranchers and forest owners to strengthen U.S. rural and agricultural communities





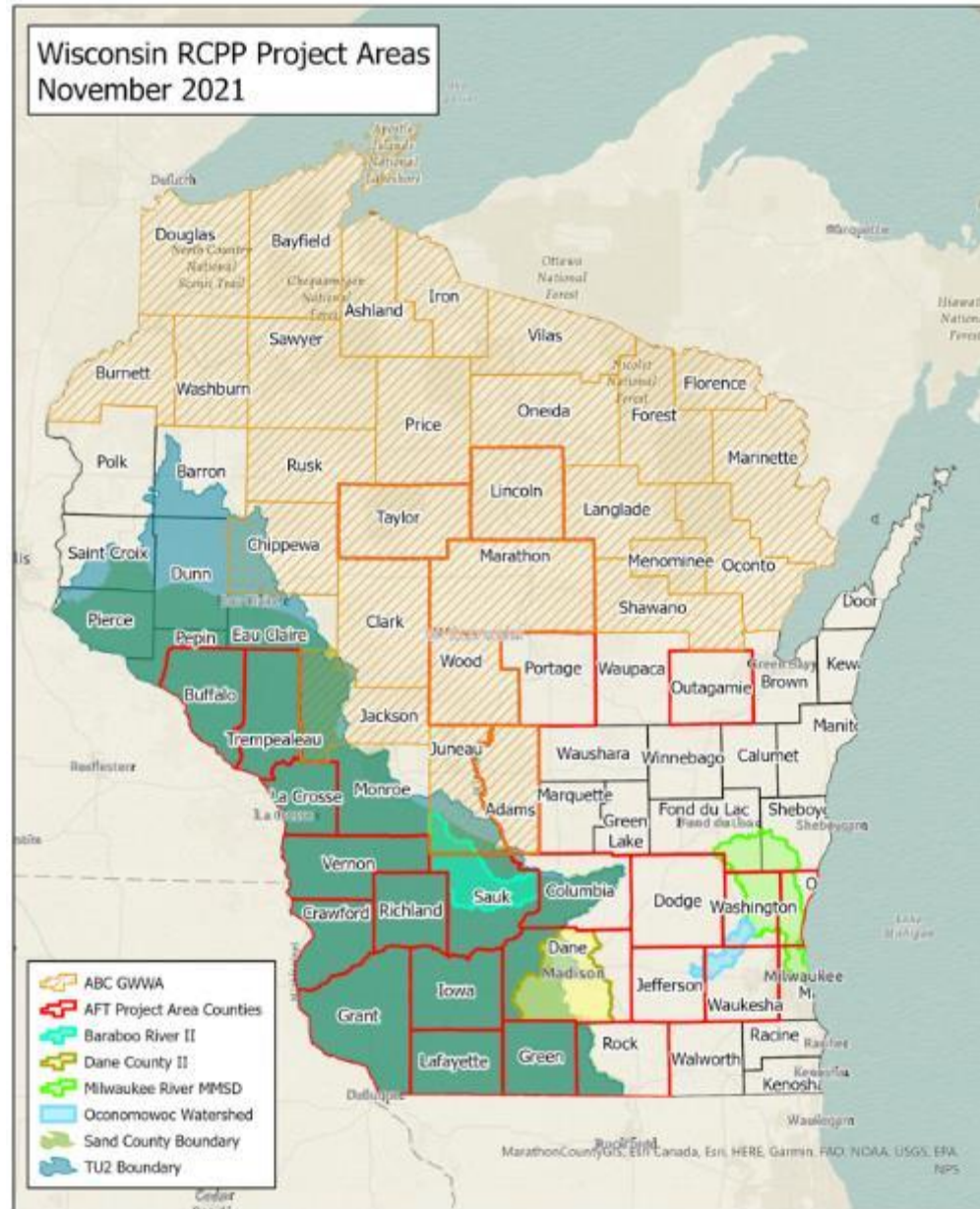
NRCS will invest up to \$225 million (nationwide) in RCPP Classic and RCPP Alternative Funding Arrangement projects for 2022.



# Regional Conservation Partnership Program

## Wisconsin Projects (Partners):

- American Bird Conservancy
- American Farmland Trust
- City of Oconomowoc
- Dane County LWRD
- Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District
- Sand County Foundation
- Sauk County CPZD
- Trout Unlimited







[Grants.gov](https://www.Grants.gov)

Proposal Submission Deadline: July 3

# Cooperative Conservation Agreements (Wisconsin)

The purpose of cooperative conservation agreements through this funding opportunity is to leverage NRCS and partner resources to:

1. Improve water quality
2. Improve soil health
3. Provide habitat for local wildlife species of concern
4. Improve the environmental and economic performance of working agricultural lands
5. Assist communities and groups to build and strengthen local food projects that provide healthy food and economic opportunities

Emphasis will be placed on projects that:

1. Build technical capacity to implement Farm Bill & NRCS conservation programs
2. Establish Demonstration Farm Networks
3. Build technical capacity of NRCS and partner field conservation employees
4. Build the capacity of local partners to develop and implement effective projects
5. Achieve positive and measurable natural resources conservation outcomes

Fiscal Year (FY) 2022  
Cooperative Conservation Agreements  
Wisconsin  
Notice of Funding Opportunity (NFO)

No. USDA-NRCS-WI-22-NOFO0001189

# NRCS State Forester and Partner Affiliate Staff



**Jared Elm**  
Forest Wildlife Specialist  
(Spooner)

**Stefan Nelson**  
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(Antigo)

**Joshua Rasmussen**  
Forest Wildlife Specialist  
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National Wild Turkey Federation  
Area Forester  
Richland Center Area Office

**Allan Braun**  
NRCS State Forester  
(Madison)





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