



State Technical Committee, Natural Resources Subcommittee Meeting

Meeting Details

Location: Parkade Plaza, USDA Training Room, Suite # 232
601 Business Loop, 70 West, Columbia, MO 65203-2546
Time: 10:00am to 3:00pm
Date: Wednesday, March 11, 2020

Agenda

9:30 am	Registration	
10:00 am	Welcome	Grover DePriest, NRCS, Acting State Conservationist Kim Viers, FSA, Acting State Executive Director
10:15 am	Priority Natural Resource Concerns	Nate Goodrich, NRCS
10:30 am	Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) EQIP FY19 Overview, EQIP 2020 Update	George Henshaw, NRCS
11:10 am	Mississippi River Basin Initiative (MRBI) National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI) Source Water Protection Priorities	Steve Hefner, NRCS
11:30 am – 12:30 pm	Lunch on your own	
12:30 pm	Farm Service Agency (FSA) Update	Allen Powell, FSA
12:45 pm	Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Management Activities	Nate Goodrich, NRCS
1:00 pm	Regional Conservation Partnerships Program (RCPP) Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) Outreach and Technical Assistance Grants	Karen Brinkman, NRCS
1:20 pm	Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) CSP FY 19 Overview, CSP FY 20 Update	George Henshaw, NRCS
1:50 pm	Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) Emergency Watershed Protection Program, Floodplain Easements FY 20 Update and Ranking Overview	Tracey Wiggins, NRCS
2:15 pm	Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP) Update	Marty Comstock, NRCS
2:30 pm	Open Discussion	
3:00 pm	Adjourn	



Natural Resource Subcommittee/Technical Committee

Attendees (March 11,2020)

Name	Organization
Jon Wingo	Pure Air Natives
Jason Sykes	MDC
Amy Hamilton	Hamilton Native Outpost
Ryan Britt	MASWCD
Adam Jones	MFA Inc.
Kim Viers	FSA
Steve Westin	MDC
Scott Radford	MDC
Brandon Butler	RAF
Kurt Boeckmann	DNR
Chris Woodson	USFWS
Leslie Holloway	MFB
Glenn Coleman	QF
Tom Lampe	SWDC
Lynne Hooper	Boone Co. Resource Management
Zeb Yoko	MRBO
Tim Gibbons	MRCC
Frank Oberle	
Darriack Steen	MO Corn Growers
Sarah Lovell	MU Center for Agro Forestry
Ken Tomlin	DNR PDWB
Jim Boschert	DNR SWCP
Bob Parks	MO AWWA
Charles Stevens	MO AWWA
Jim Ball	Walnut Council
Ken Henderson	MDA
Jim Kavpowicz	Missouri Coalition of the Environment
Melissa Vatterutt	MCE
Alisson Morales	MCE
Justine Gartner	MO Dept of Conservation
Brad Powell	MSWCDEA
Shelly Berry	FSA

State Tech Committee - Natural Resources Subcommittee Meeting

Environmental Quality Incentives
Program

March 11, 2020



 **EQIP**

**Environmental
Quality Incentives
Program**

EQIP Overview – 2018 Farm Bill

- CSP and EQIP remain separate and distinct.
- Interim rule published in Federal Register on December 17, 2019. Comments were due February 17, 2020
- 2018 Farm Bill Created a new EQIP Incentives Program.



EQIP Overview – 2018 Farm Bill

National Funding Targets

- Wildlife target increased from 5% to 10%
- Livestock target decreased from 60% to 50%
- At least 10% of funds under the conservation title is reserved for Source Water Protection



EQIP Overview – 2018 Farm Bill

High Priority Practices – up to 10 practices that are eligible for increased payment.

For FY20 Missouri, in consultation with the State Technical Committee, has identified the following high priority practices: (90% cost incentive)

- Conservation Crop Rotation
- Residue and Tillage Management, No Till
- Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment
- Silvopasture Establishment
- Field Border
- Nutrient Management
- Prescribed Grazing
- Access Control
- Riparian Forest Buffer
- Prescribed Grazing

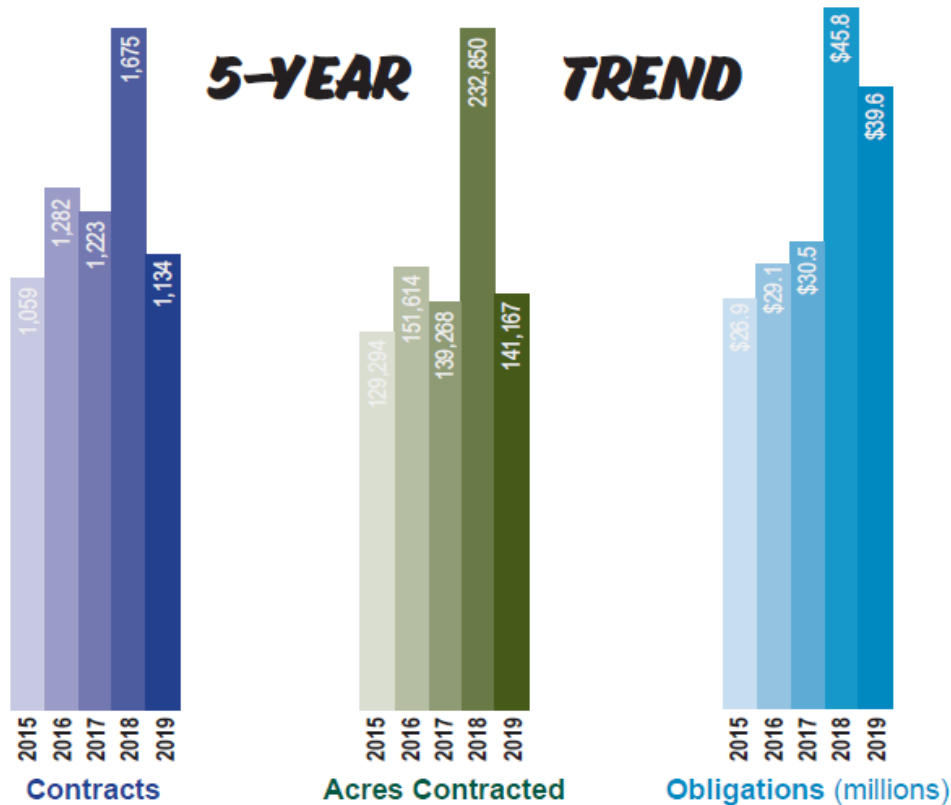
FY19 EQIP Update



EQIP

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural and forestry producers to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits such as improved water and air quality, conserved ground and surface water, reduced soil erosion and sedimentation, and improved or created wildlife habitat. Fund allocation is based upon Congressional mandates, land-use data and priority natural resources concerns within states. EQIP helps farmers voluntarily address resource concerns on their land by implementing conservation practices based on the participant's objectives and goals for balancing production and environmental benefit. In FY19, EQIP remained one of Missouri NRCS' most popular programs.



Comparing EQIP Obligations Fiscal Year 2019

State	Obligation (millions)
1. Texas	\$105.7
2. California	\$94.5
3. Georgia	\$48.6
4. Arkansas	\$48.4
5. Mississippi	\$48.0
6. Colorado	\$47.1
7. Missouri	\$39.6
8. Wisconsin	\$38.2
9. Iowa	\$36.6
10. Tennessee	\$34.9

1. **Cover Crops**
\$8.9 million
172,903 acres
2. **Terraces**
\$5.4 million
1,789,982 feet
3. **Underground Outlets**
\$3.8 million
974,343 feet
4. **Fence**
\$2.2 million
1.6 million feet
5. **Conservation Cover**
\$1.8 million
3,949 acres
6. **Livestock Pipeline**
\$1.4 million
607,790 feet
7. **Forage and Biomass**
\$1.4 million
9,595 acres
8. **High Tunnels**
\$1.3 million
354,066 square feet
9. **Waste Transfer**
\$1.1 million
37 total
10. **Roofs and Covers**
\$1.1 million
39 total

EQIP on the Ground in FY19

Missouri participated in a Highly Erodible Land (HEL) Ephemeral Gully Pilot in FY19. The purpose of the pilot was to direct financial assistance to producers to address ephemeral gullies on HEL cropland. Priority was given to those participants who received a variance in the past 2 years during the FSA Compliance Reviews, as well as those with existing ephemeral gullies as a resource concern. The pilot resulted in 117 contracts obligated on over 14,406 acres.

Legend

- Water
- FWS
- County
- Section
- 1
- 2
- 3-4
- 5-6
- 7-10

117 Contracts
\$8,382,018 Obligation
14,406 Acres

NRCS made \$1 million available to help farmers plant cover crops on prevent planting acres in 13 presidentially declared counties in Missouri. The 13 counties included Andrew, Atchison, Buchanan, Carroll, Chariton, Holt, Mississippi, New Madrid, Pemiscot, Perry, Platte, Ray & Ste Genevieve. This funding resulted in 80 contracts obligated on more than 26,000 acres.

Legend

- ARRA
- NORA
- County contracts
- 1 - 2
- 3 - 6
- 7 - 9
- 10 - 12
- 13 - 18

80 Contracts
\$816,762 Obligation
26,190 Acres

EQIP FY2020

- Application Deadline: March 30, 2020
- Funding is competitive and applications are evaluated for funding with other eligible applications within the same land use and/or initiative focus area within a Ranking Pool.
- Applications are scored based on ranking scores that are generated through the new agency Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool (CART).
- Each applicant's ranking score is a combination of an assessment of the site vulnerability, planned conservation practices, program priority questions, resource priority questions and a cost efficiency multiplier.
- FY 2020 Payments Rates are available on the Missouri NRCS Website

Focus Areas

- General EQIP
- Initiatives: Soil Health Cropland, Agroforestry, Organic, High Tunnel, On Farm Energy, NWQI, MRBI, Joint Chief's Landscape Restoration Partnership

RCPP-EQIP

- Improving Working Lands for Monarch Butterflies, Targeted Watershed Conservation

Seeking Input for FY21

Resource Categories

- Soil Quality Limitation
- Degraded Plant Condition
- Field Sediment, Nutrient, and Pathogen Loss
- Terrestrial Habitat
- Wind and Water Erosion
- Livestock Production Limitation
- Field Pesticide Loss
- Pest Pressure
- Concentrated Erosion
- Source Water Depletion
- Weather Resilience
- Storage and Handling of Pollutants
- Inefficient Energy Use
- Aquatic Habitat
- Air Quality Emissions
- Salt Losses to Water
- Fire Management

***Seeking Input for FY 2021 on 5 Priority Resources Categories
Please provide comments by March 27, 2020.***

Identified FY20 Priority Resource Categories

High Priority Practices

State Conservationists and Area Directors, in consultation with the State Technical Committee, have the option to select up to 10 high priority practices, which may receive increased payment rates. A high priority practice must meet one of the following criteria:

- Addresses specific causes of impairment relating to excessive nutrients in ground or surface water;
- Addresses the conservation of water, to advance drought mitigation and declining aquifers;
- Meets other environmental priorities and other priority resource concerns identified in habitat or other area restoration plans; or
- Is geographically targeted to address a natural resource concern in a specific watershed.
- Selection of practices to receive higher payment could use practices that are identified through assessments already completed at the area or state level:
- Selection of practices to receive higher payment should incentivize conservation practices that have high potential for conservation benefit but are underutilized.
- Selection of practices to receive higher payment should not be used to incentivize those practices that already are widespread and common.

Note: Some (or all) of the selected EQIP high priority practices may be the same as the source water protection practices, provided that the high priority practices meet the source water protection criteria.

Seeking Recommendations for FY 2021 High Priority Practices
Please provide comments/recommendations March 27, 2020

Thank You

Open Discussion

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Missouri NRCS Conservation Initiatives and Source Water Protection Efforts

Presentation to the MO NRCS State Technical
Committee – Natural Resources Subcommittee

March 11, 2020

Steve Hefner, Natural Resources Specialist, MO NRCS



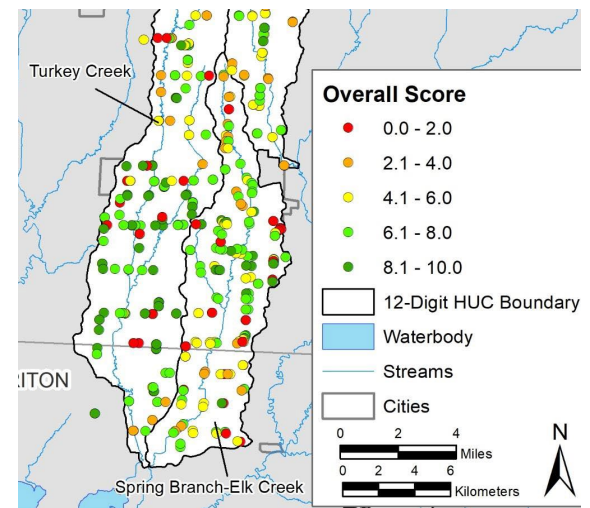
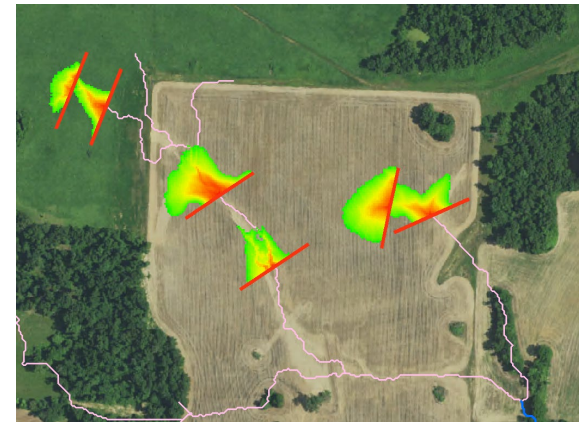
All Conservation Initiatives now receive area-wide assessments

- Key Tools MO

- NRCS uses

- Interpretation of Aerial Photography
 - STEPL Water Quality Modeling
 - ACPF Conservation Placement Modeling

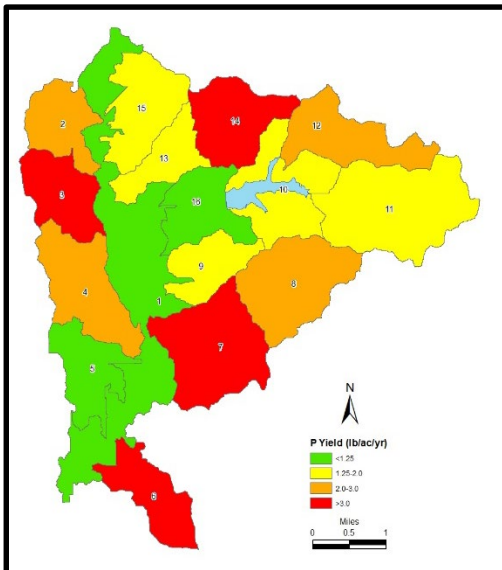
- Field Validation of Results



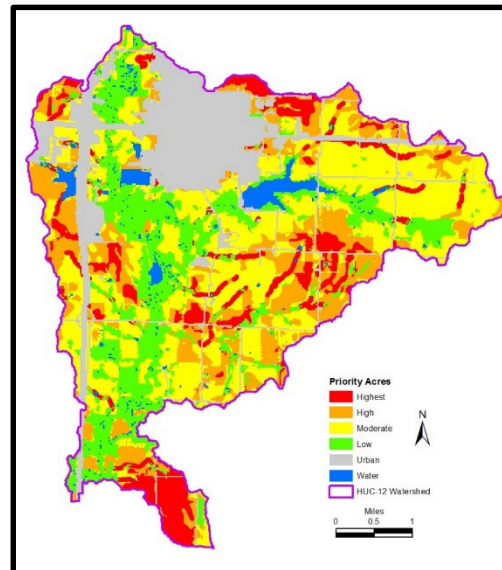
Integrating The Assessment Results

- Overlay the results of the assessment analysis to find vulnerable areas

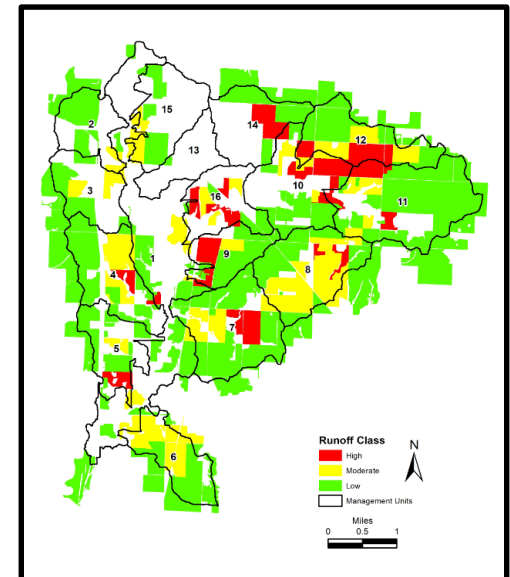
WQ Modeling



Land Use Considerations

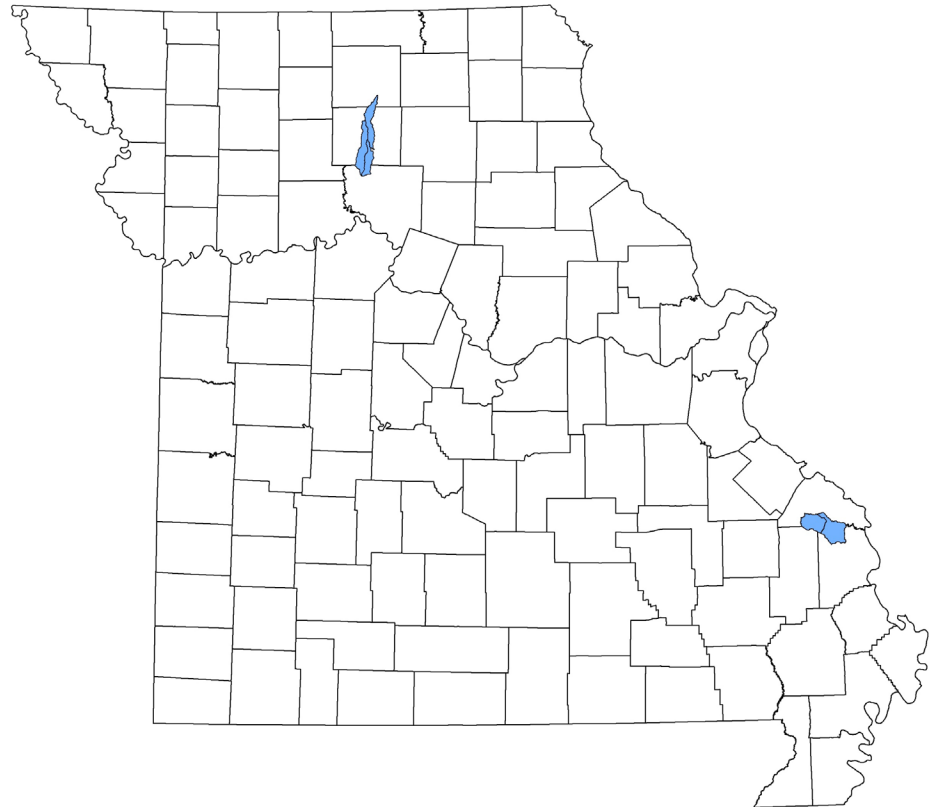


Runoff Considerations



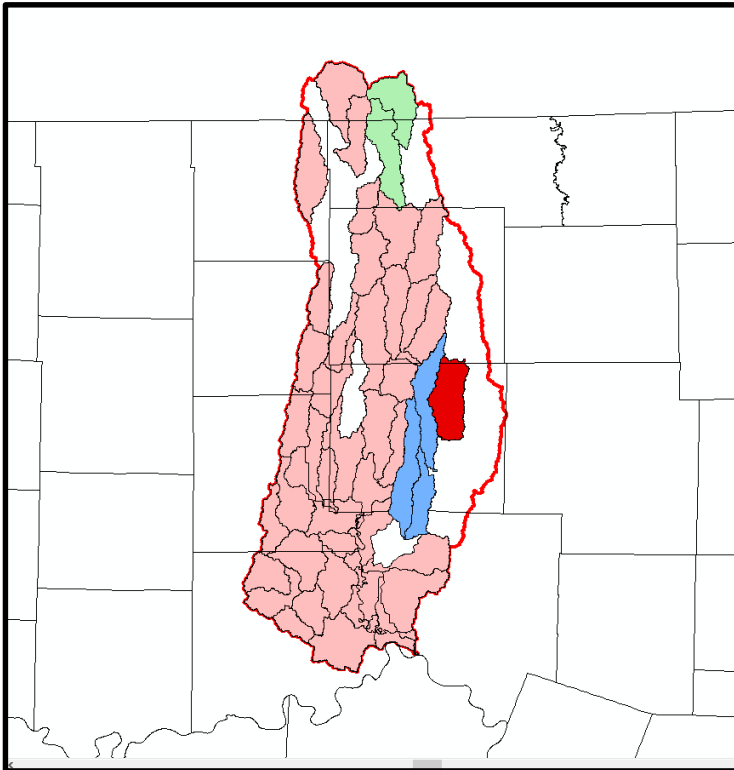
2020 Mississippi River Healthy Watersheds Initiative (MRBI)

- Five 12-Digit HUCs
- Spring Branch-Elk Creek, Turkey Creek, Long Branch
- Upper Apple Creek, Middle Apple Creek

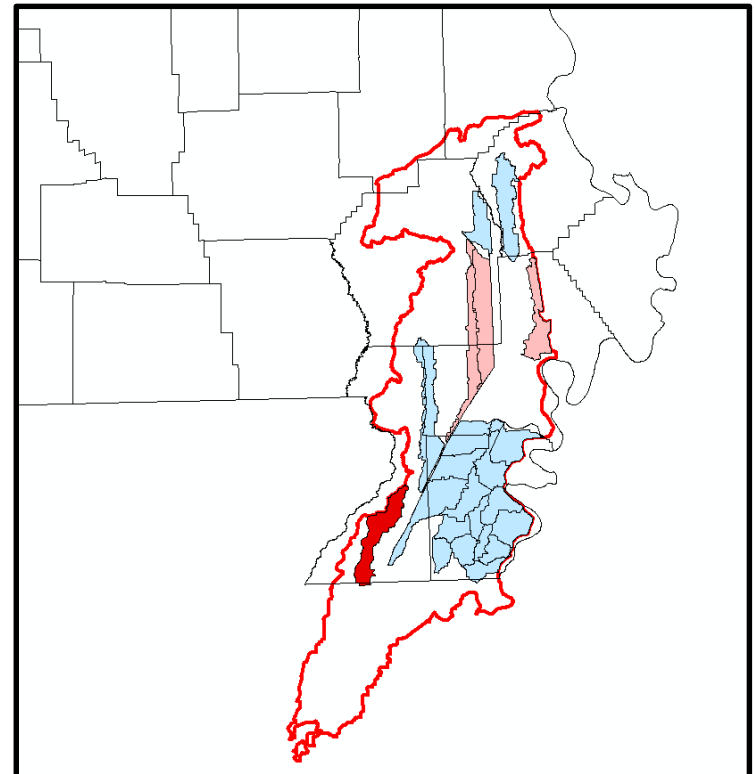


MRBI Focus Areas

Lower Grand

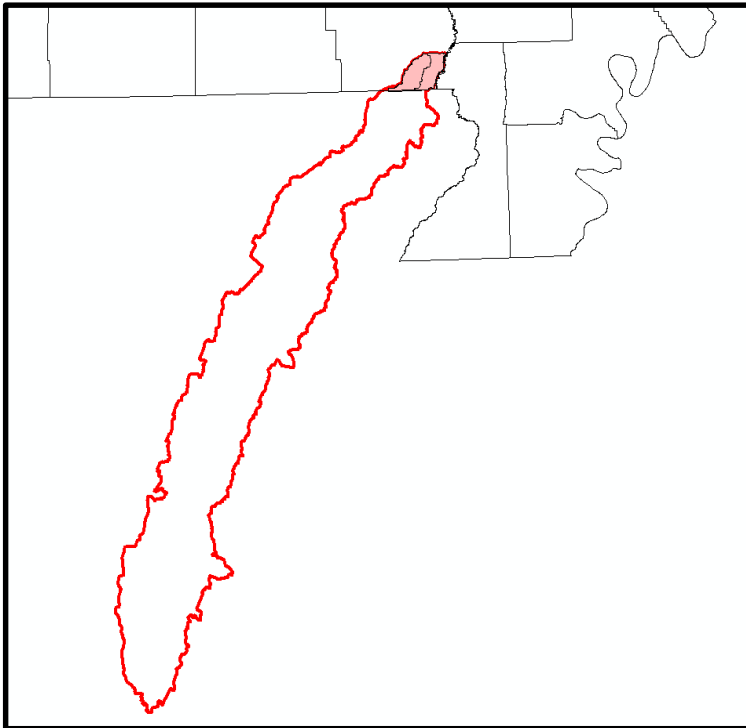


Little River Ditches

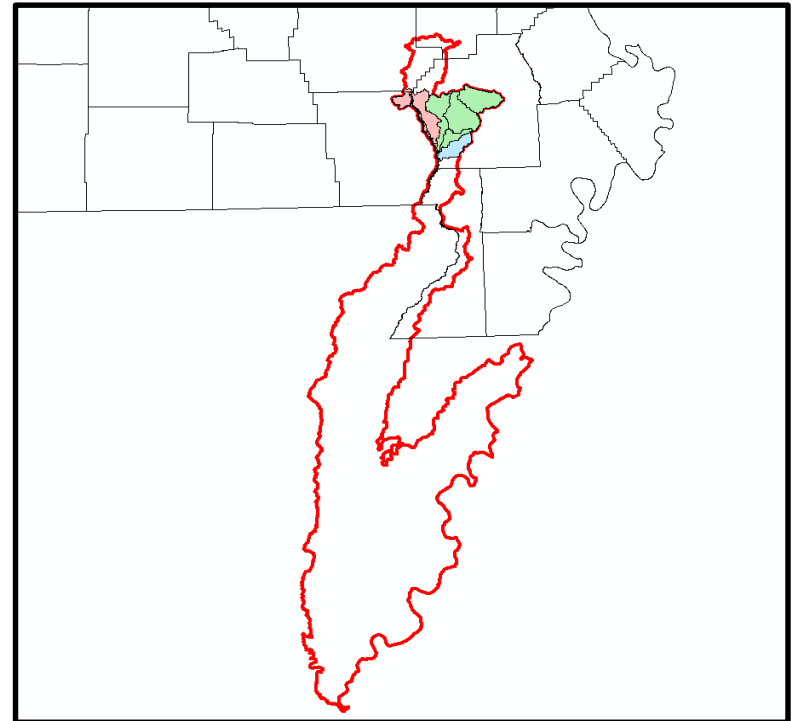


MRBI Focus Areas

- Cache River

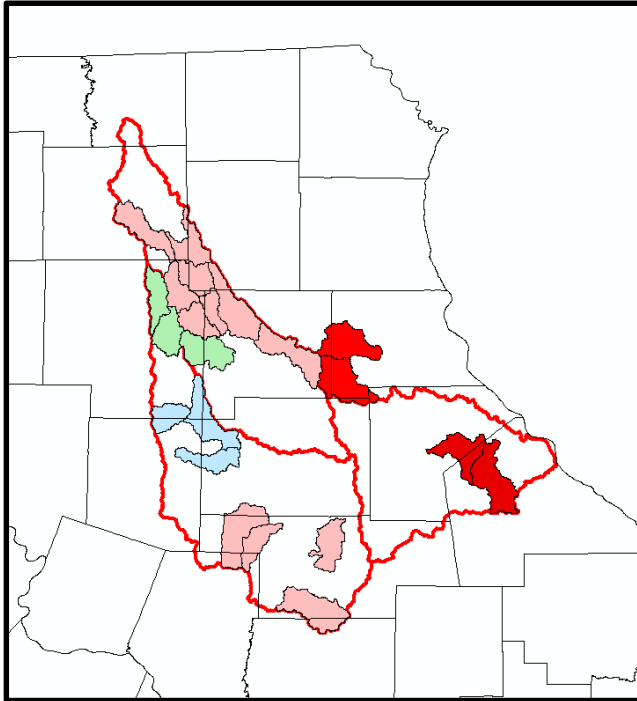


Lower St. Francis River

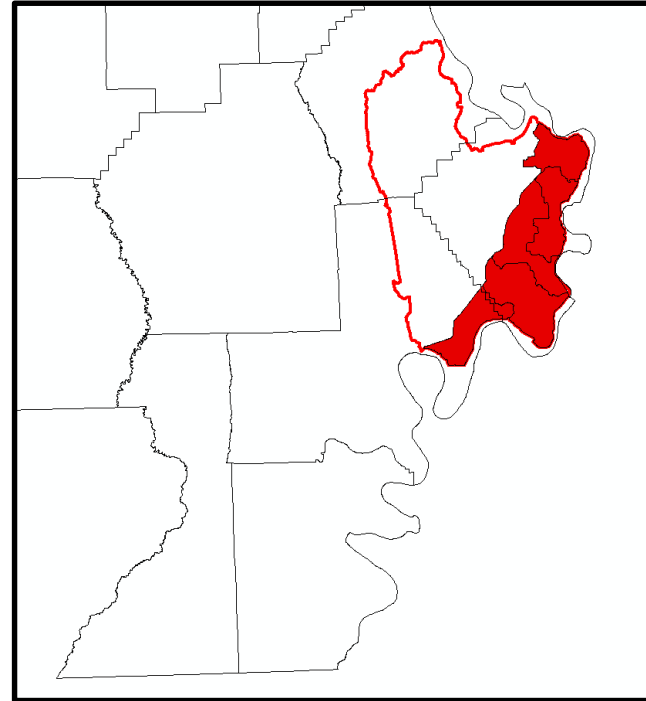


MRBI Focus Areas

- Salt River System

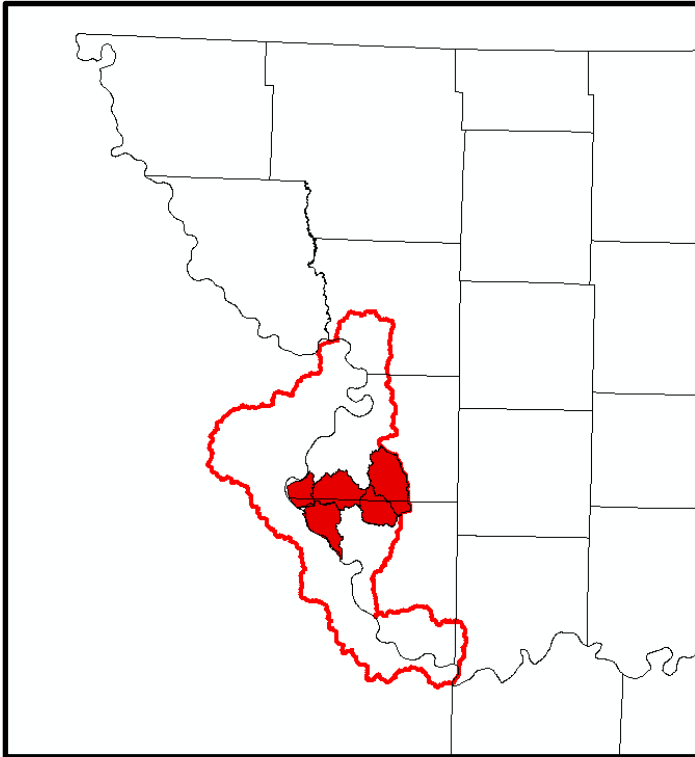


New Madrid-St. Johns

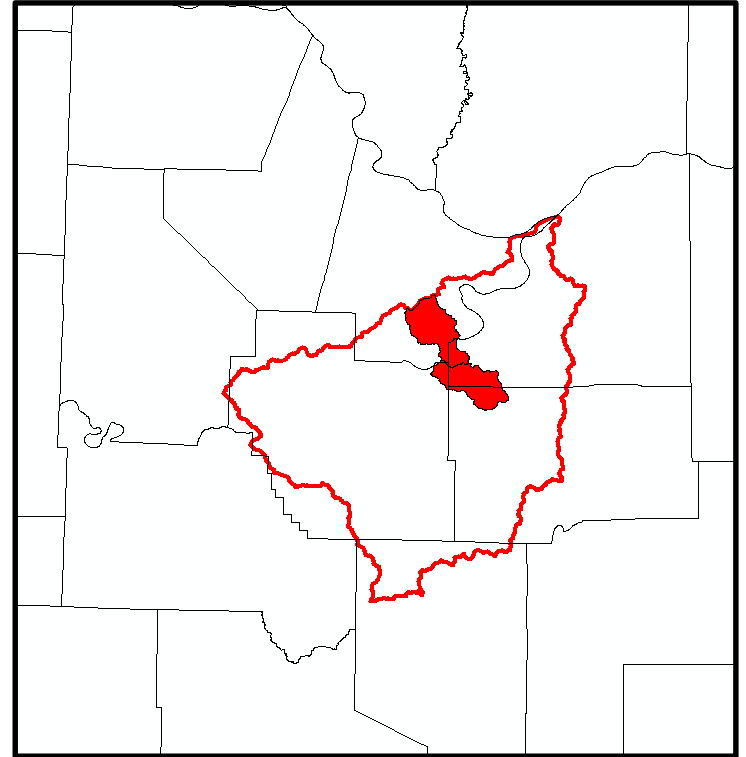


MRBI Focus Areas

Independence-Sugar

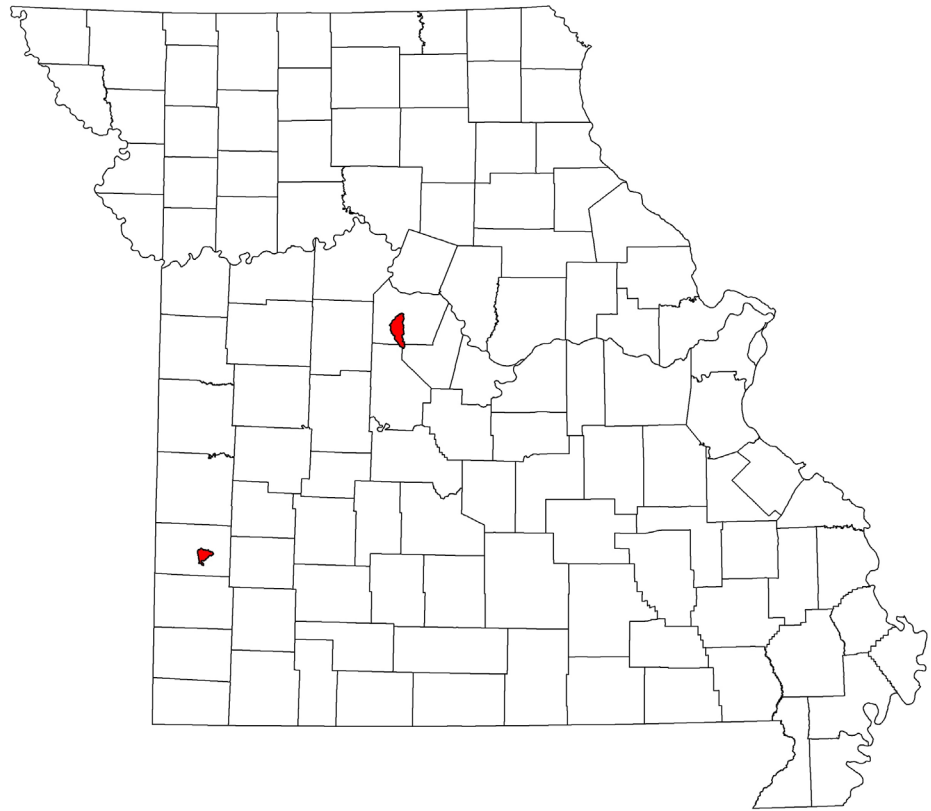


Lower Osage

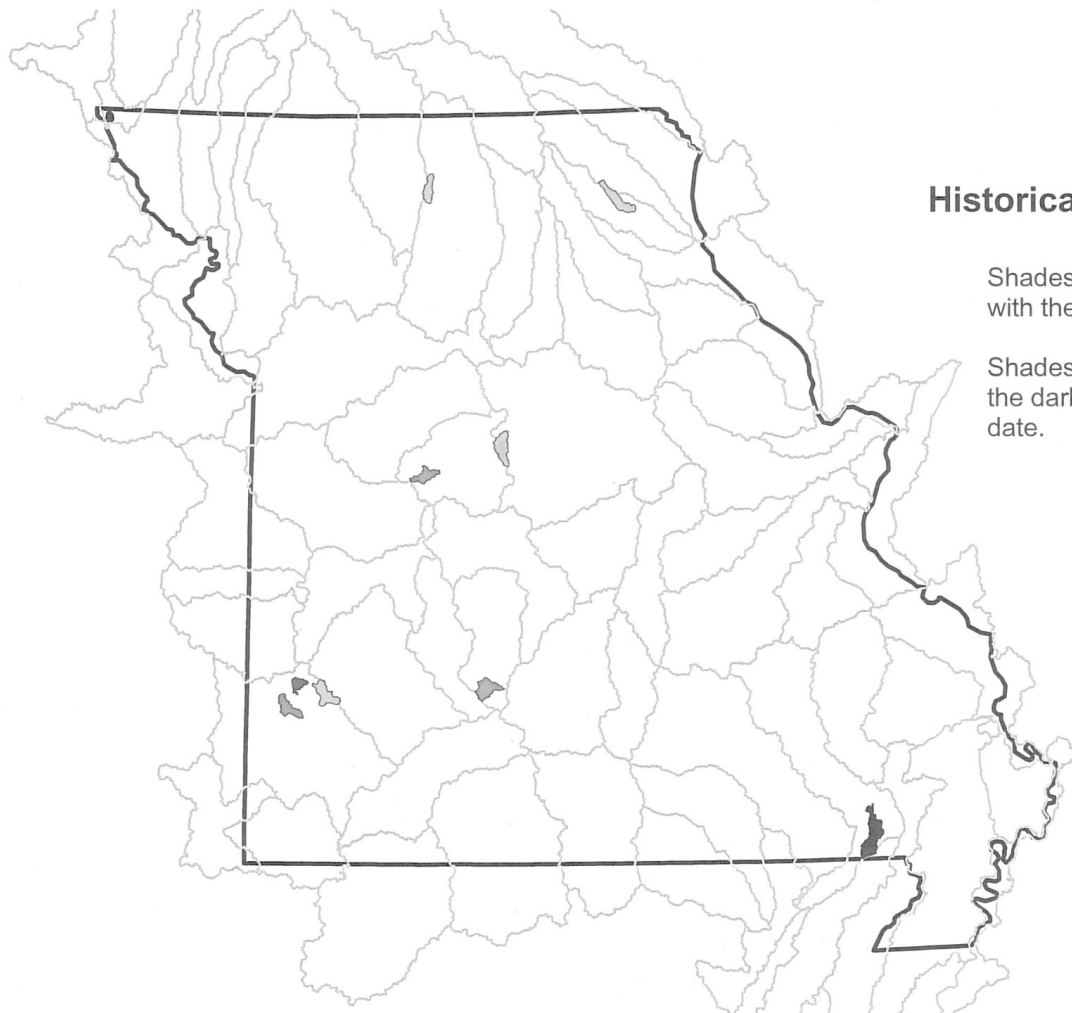


2020 National Water Quality Initiative

- Two 12-Digit HUCs
- Headwaters Petite Saline Creek
- Lamar Lake



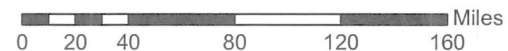
2012-2020 National Water Quality Initiative



Historical and Future Missouri Projects

Shades of Blue are current or historical projects with the darkest hue the most current.

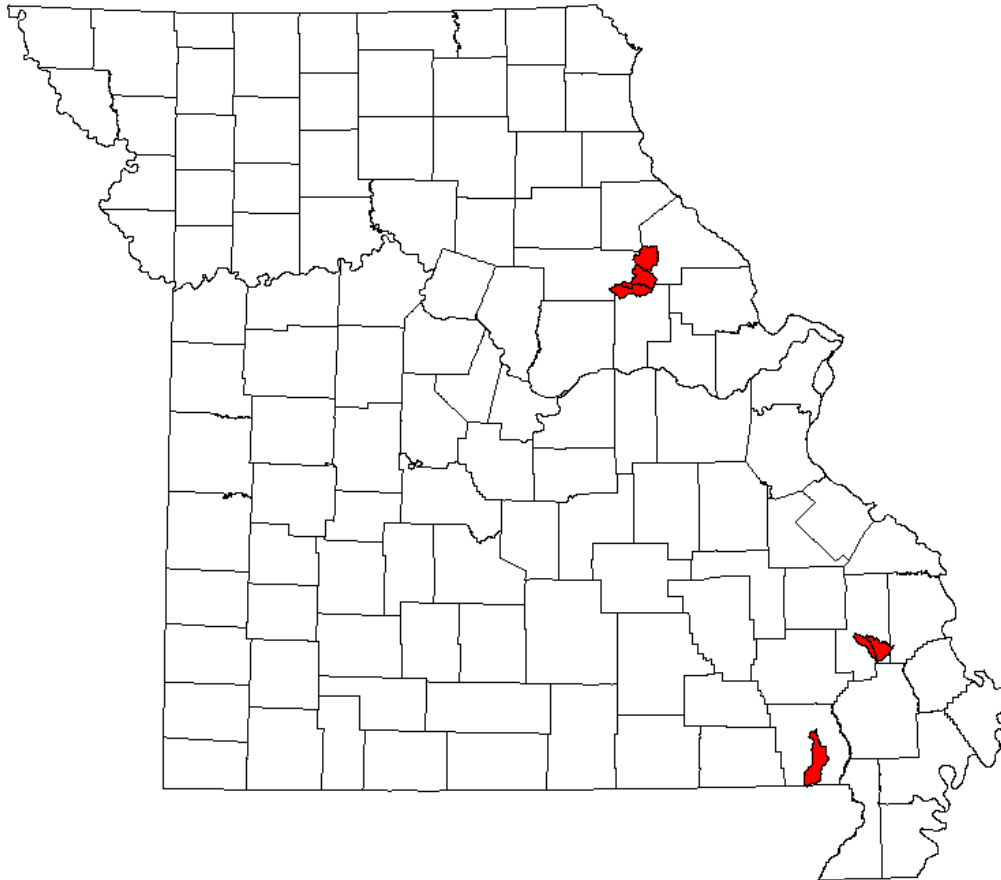
Shades of Gray are future planned projects with the darkest hue having the farthest projected start date.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
COLUMBIA, MO
MARCH, 2019

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MRBI 2021 Readiness Watersheds

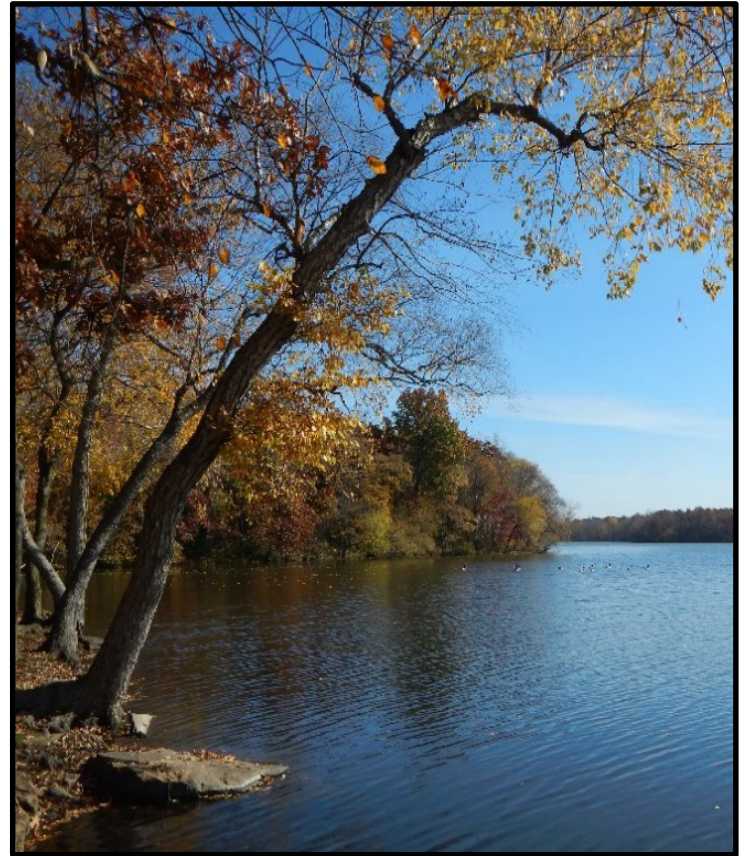


Initiative Input - 2022

- Provide your suggestions to State Conservationist
- 2 MRBI and 1 NWQI watershed projects will be proposed to NHQ
- Input will be balanced with other considerations
 - Source Water Protection Priorities
 - TMDL list
 - 303d list
 - Unfunded Needs
 - Staff Workload

2018 Agriculture Improvement Act (Farm Bill) – Source Water Protection

- 10% minimum of NRCS conservation funding directed toward source water protection.
- Authorization for water utilities to work with State Technical Committees in identifying priority areas.
- Additional incentives for farmers who employ practices that benefit source waters.



Water-Related Resource Concerns

Program practices should have a net positive effect on the source water. Will use an NRCS assessment matrix as guidance.

- Water Quantity – Source Water Depletion
 - Irrigation Management, Surface and Ground Water Depletion
- Water Quality - Field Sediment, Nutrient, and Pathogen Loss
 - Nutrients transported to surface and ground water, Pathogens and Chemicals from Organics to Surface and Ground water, Sediment transported to surface.



Actions Taken Thus Far

- Organize a subcommittee meeting and convene a meeting on May 22, 2019.
- List of organizations represented
 - MO Department of Natural Resources
 - Missouri Rural Water Association
 - Missouri American Water Works Association
 - US EPA
 - USDA – MO NRCS
- Discussed 2020 strategies to bring to the State Technical Committee in June, 2019.

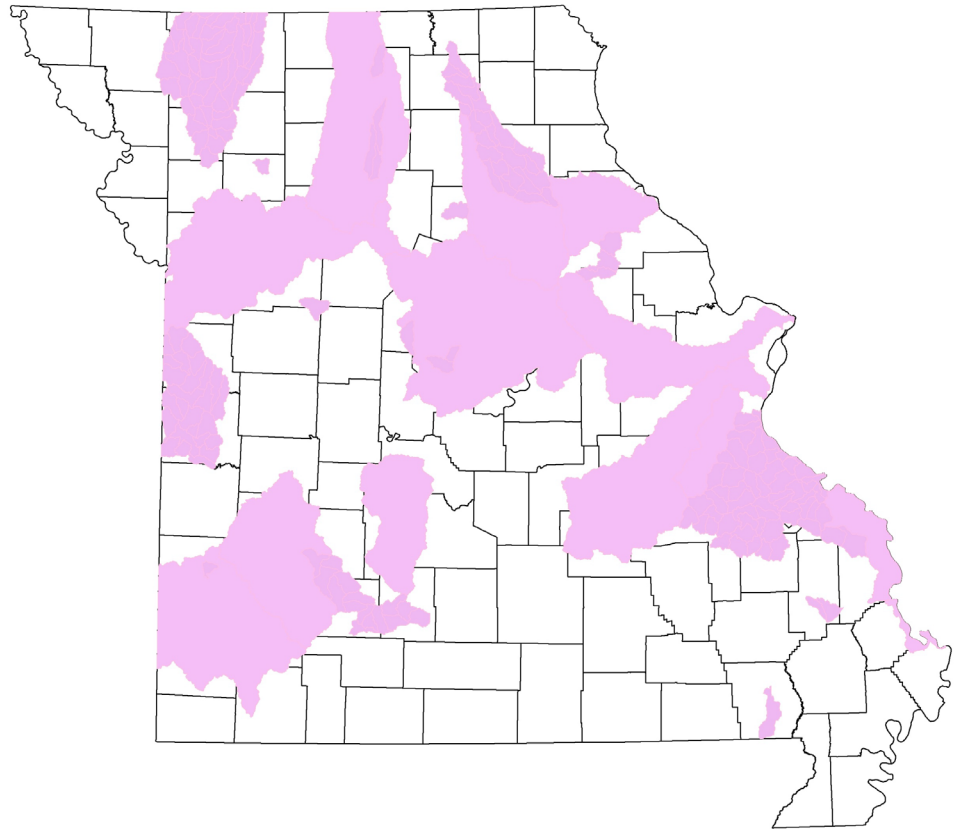


Strategies Discussed

- Capitalize on existing efforts and partnerships
- Don't focus all efforts toward impairments but include proactive activities.
- Showcase effective source water protection as a model to other communities.
- Monitor to track conditions.
- Outreach not only to landowners, but to water providers to strengthen the understanding between land management and water supply.
- Consider a pilot program in a very small watershed to chart a course for future activities.

2020 Designated SWP Watersheds

- These sites have existing watershed plans prepared or have watershed assessments in progress.



Outreach and Watershed Tours

- Ag service providers
 - Non-profit conservation organizations
 - Private Business and Industry
 - Municipalities
-
- Farmers in Water Treatment Plants
 - Water Treatment Operators on Farms



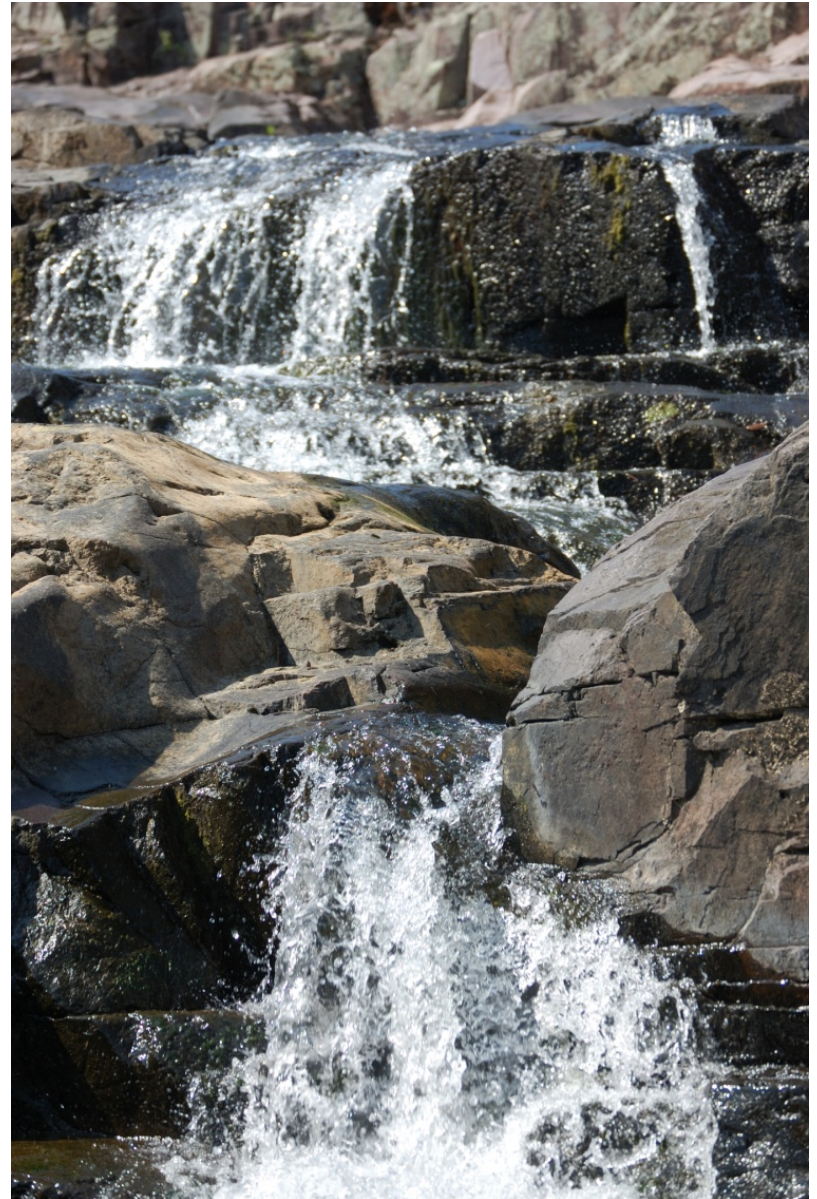
Feedback

Submit feedback to:

Grover DePriest
Acting MO NRCS State Conservationist

Comments by March 27, 2020

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USDA FARM SERVICE AGENCY
State Technical Committee
March 11, 2020

Emergency Conservation Program (ECP)

47 Counties approved for ECP
\$448,127,000 allocated for flooding in Missouri
\$ 2,379,060 allocated for tornados in Missouri

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

Twenty-two million acres enrolled nationally. The 2018 Farm Bill lifted the cap from 24 million to 27 million acres by 2023.

2018 Farm Bill expanded the haying and grazing opportunities on CRP and removed the 25% reduction in some cases. The 2018 Farm Bill also reduced the CRP rental rates to no more than 85% of the county rental rate for general and no more than 90% of the county rental rate for continuous. This is designed to better align CRP rental rates with market-base rates.

In Missouri:

136,943 acres of CRP expiring in 2020
132,009 acres of CRP expiring in 2021
233,777 acres of CRP expiring in 2022

General Signup 54 closed on February 28, 2020. There were 120,600 acres submitted for ranking in Missouri. Hope to know results in April. A General CRP signup is expected to be held each year from December through February.

Continuous CRP signup ongoing through August 21, 2020.

CRP Grasslands

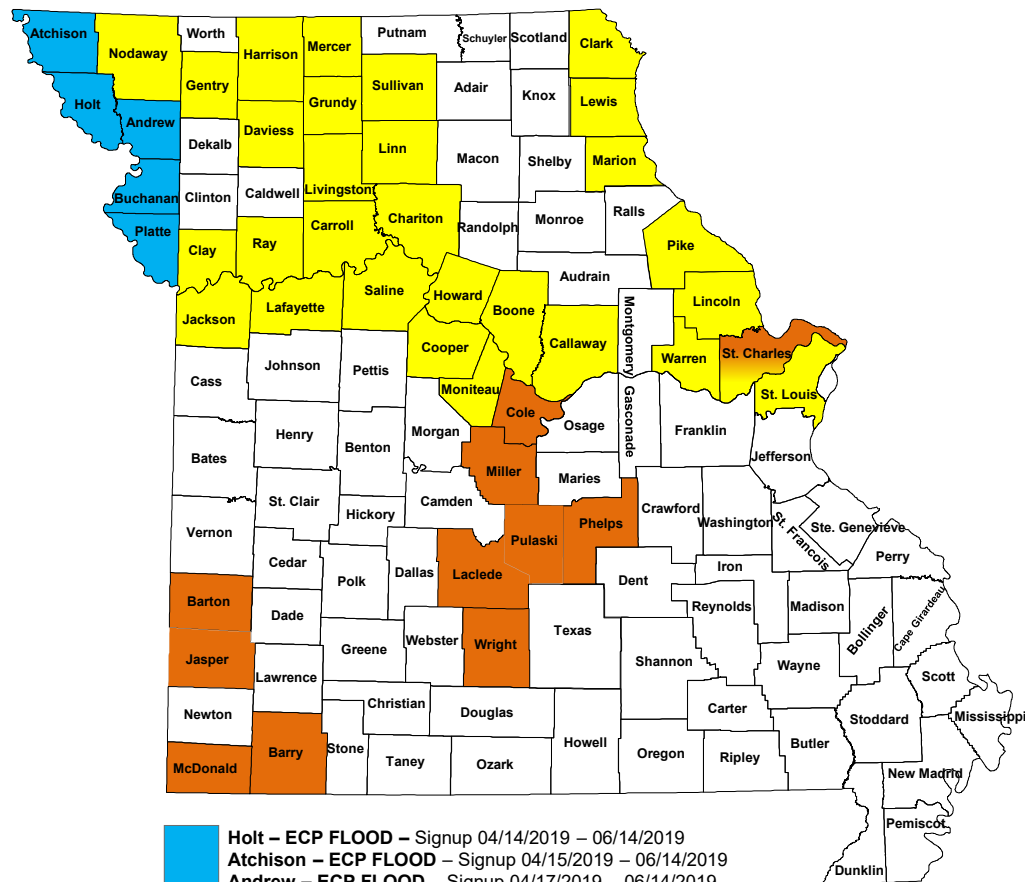
Signup will be held March 16th through May 15, 2020. This is a competitive ranking signup. Acreage cap was also increased for this program.

919,825 acres enrolled Nationally
2,000 acres enrolled in Missouri.

CRP Transition Incentive Program (TIP)

TIP is an option for producers interested in transitioning land to a beginning farmer or rancher or a member of a socially disadvantaged group to return land to production for sustainable grazing or crop production. CRP contract holders no longer need to be a retired or retiring owner or operator to transition their land. CRP participant can receive two additional years of annual payments.

2019 COUNTIES APPROVED FOR ECP



Legend

Holt – ECP FLOOD – Signup 04/14/2019 – 06/14/2019
Atchison – ECP FLOOD – Signup 04/15/2019 – 06/14/2019
Andrew – ECP FLOOD – Signup 04/17/2019 – 06/14/2019
Buchanan – ECP FLOOD – Signup 04/17/2019 – 06/14/2019
Nodaway – ECP FLOOD – Signup 05/01/2019 – 06/14/2019
Platte – ECP FLOOD – Signup 05/01/2019 – 06/14/2019

Barry – ECP TORNADO – Signup 05/08/2019 – 06/07/2019
Wright – ECP TORNADO – Signup 05/29/2019 – 06/28/2019
Barton – ECP TORNADO - Signup 06/10/2019 – 07/09/2019
Miller – ECP TORNADO - Signup 06/10/2019 – 07/09/2019
Cole – ECP TORNADO - Signup 06/10/2019 – 07/09/2019
Laclede- ECP-TORNADO- Signup 06/14/2019—07/13/2019
Pulaski- ECP-TORNADO- Signup 06/14/2019—07/13/2019
Jasper- ECP-TORNADO- Signup 06/19/2019—07/19/2019
McDonald-ECP-TORNADO- Signup 07/08/2019-08-07/2019
Phelps-ECP-TORNADO-
St. Charles – ECP Tornado – Signup 09/04/2019-10/04/2019

ECP FLOOD

Approved for ECP sign up

July 1st-August 30th

Boone	Linn	Saline
Callaway	Lewis	Sullivan
Carroll	Lincoln	St. Charles
Chariton	Linn	St. Louis
Clark	Livingston	
Clay	Marion	
Cooper	Mercer	
Daviess	Moniteau	
Gentry	Nodaway	
Grundy	Pike	
Howard	Ray	
Jackson		
Lafayette		

Warren July 25 – August 23

Harrison – August 12 – September 20

Conservation Reserve Program - Required Management Activities

The management activity must be designed to ensure plant diversity and wildlife benefits while ensuring protection of the soil and water resources. Management activities are site specific and are used to enhance the wildlife benefits for the site.

CRP Practice	Current Mid Contract Management Activity	Proposed Required Management Activities
CP-1 Establishment of Permanent Introduced Grasses and Legumes	Strip Disking, Prescribed Burning, Chemical Application	Strip Disking, Prescribed Burning, Chemical Application, Grazing
CP-2 Establishment of Permanent Native Grasses	Strip Disking, Prescribed Burning, Chemical Application	Strip Disking, Prescribed Burning, Chemical Application, Grazing
CP-3 Tree Planting	NEW Planting: Interseeding legumes, native grasses, and/or native forbs, Vegetative release, Pruning. EXISTING Planting: Interseeding legumes, native grasses, and/or native forbs, Vegetative release, Pruning, Thinning, Inner seedling planting	Not Required
CP-3A Hardwood Tree Planting	NEW Planting: Interseeding legumes, native grasses, and/or native forbs, Vegetative release, Pruning. EXISTING Planting: Interseeding legumes, native grasses, and/or native forbs, Vegetative release, Pruning, Thinning, Inner seedling planting	Not Required
CP-4D Permanent Wildlife Habitat	Strip Disking, Prescribed Burning, Chemical Application	Strip Disking, Prescribed Burning, Chemical Application, Grazing
CP-5A Field Windbreak Establishment	NEW Planting: Interseeding legumes, native grasses, and/or native forbs, Vegetative release, Pruning. EXISTING Planting: Interseeding legumes, native grasses, and/or native forbs, Vegetative release, Pruning, Thinning, Inner seedling planting	Not Required
CP-8A Grass Waterways	Dormant broadcast inter-seeding of forbs/legumes (preceded by mowing or burning if needed)	Not Required
CP-9 Shallow Water Areas for Wildlife	Pool management, disking or burning on grass buffer	Require on upland buffer areas only: Strip Disking, Prescribed Burning, Chemical Application
CP-12 Wildlife Food Plots	Annual - disking, Permanent grass/forb/legume - interseeding of legumes and/or forbs	Not Required

CP-15A Establishment of Permanent Vegetative Cover (Contour Grass Strips)	Strip Disking, Prescribed Burning, Chemical Application	Not Required
CP-15B Establishment of Permanent Vegetative Cover (Contour Grass Strips) on Terraces	Strip Disking, Prescribed Burning, Chemical Application	Not Required
CP-16A Shelterbelt Establishment		Not Required
CP-21 Filter Strips	Strip Disking, Prescribed Burning, Chemical Application	Not Required
CP-22 Riparian Forest Buffer	NEW Planting: Interseeding legumes, native grasses, and/or native forbs, Vegetative release, Pruning. EXISTING Planting: Interseeding legumes, native grasses, and/or native forbs, Vegetative release, Pruning, Thinning, Inner seedling planting	Not Required
CP-23 Wetland Restoration	Pool management, disking or burning on grass buffer	Require on upland buffer areas only: Strip Disking, Prescribed Burning, Chemical Application
CP-23A Wetland Restoration, Non-Floodplain	Pool management, disking or burning on grass buffer	Require on upland buffer areas only: Strip Disking, Prescribed Burning, Chemical Application
CP-25 Rare and Declining Habitat	Strip Disking, Prescribed Burning, Chemical Application	Strip Disking, Prescribed Burning, Chemical Application, Grazing
CP-29 Marginal Pastureland Wildlife Habitat Buffer	Strip Disking, Prescribed Burning, Chemical Application	Strip Disking, Prescribed Burning, Chemical Application, Grazing
CP-30 Marginal Pastureland Wetland Buffer	Strip Disking, Prescribed Burning, Chemical Application	Strip Disking, Prescribed Burning, Chemical Application, Grazing
CP-31 Bottomland Timber Establishment on Wetlands	NEW Planting: Interseeding legumes, native grasses, and/or native forbs, Vegetative release, Pruning. EXISTING Planting: Interseeding legumes, native grasses, and/or native forbs, Vegetative release, Pruning, Thinning, Inner seedling planting	Not Required
CP-33 Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds	Strip Disking, Prescribed Burning, Chemical Application	Strip Disking, Prescribed Burning, Chemical Application, Grazing
CP-38E SAFE-Grass	Strip Disking, Prescribed Burning, Chemical Application	Strip Disking, Prescribed Burning, Chemical Application, Grazing

CP-40 FWP Aquaculture Wetland Restoration	Pool management, disking or burning on grass buffer	Not Required
CP-42 Pollinator Habitat	Strip Disking, Prescribed Burning, Chemical Application	Strip Disking, Prescribed Burning, Chemical Application, Grazing
CP-43 Prairie Strips	Strip Disking, Prescribed Burning, Chemical Application	Strip Disking, Prescribed Burning, Chemical Application, Grazing
CP-88 Permanent Native Grasses and Legumes	Strip Disking, Prescribed Burning, Chemical Application	Not required (per Par 428, A.)

Missouri NRCS

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)
Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)
Technical Assistance Grants



United States Department of Agriculture

March 2020

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

The projects funded, number of contributing partners and total funds contributed through RCPP is making more conservation opportunities available to Missourians.

FY19 RCPP Accomplishments

- ▶ 6 - Number of RCPP projects funded
- ▶ \$2.36 Million - NRCS funds obligated
- ▶ 39 - Number of contributing partners
- ▶ \$18.3 Million - Amount of funds leveraged by partners

- ▶ \$129,666 supporting forage and biomass plantings (364 Ac. Planned)
- ▶ \$89,480 of conservation cover planned
- ▶ \$86,203 supporting building of new fence
- ▶ \$84,815 for restoration of rare or declining natural communities
- ▶ \$76,354 for forest stand improvement

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) FY20 Projects

Targeted Watershed Conservation



Improving Working Lands for Monarch Butterflies



Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

2018 Farm Bill contains improvements to make RCPP more efficient and effective. NRCS seeks to co-invest with partners to implement projects that demonstrate innovative solutions to conservation challenges. Efforts are focused on measurable improvements and outcomes.

The RCPP Interim Rule was posted for comment on the Federal Register on February 12, 2020. Key changes include:

- ▶ 2018 Farm Bill made RCPP a stand-alone program with its own dedicated funding, simplifying rules for partners and producers.
- ▶ Reduced the number of funding pools to two - Critical Conservation Areas and State/Multi-state Funding Pools
- ▶ Emphasizes project outcomes for both NRCS and Partners.
- ▶ Allowed Partnership agreement renewal opportunities.
- ▶ Expanded the purpose of the program to include protection of drinking water.
- ▶ Expands flexibility for alternative funding arrangements with partners and availability of watershed program authorities to projects outside critical conservation areas.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

NRCS invites comments on this interim rule through April 13 on the Federal Register.

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/02/13/2020-01812/regional-conservation-partnership-program>

Electronic comments must be submitted through regulations.gov under Docket ID NRCS-2019-0012.

All written comments received will be publicly available on regulations.gov as well.

NRCS will evaluate public comments to determine whether additional changes are needed.

The agency plans on publishing a final rule following public comment review.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

FY2020 activities for RCPP under the new interim rule:

New Proposals

- ▶ An announcement of program funding for new RCPP proposals was issued earlier this year with a deadline of December 3, 2019. Funded projects have not been announced.
- ▶ Additional announcement of program funding for new RCPP proposals will be coming in the near future.

Competitive Renewals

The 2018 Farm Bill allowed for existing RCPP projects to apply for competitive renewal. The following projects have been approved for renewal:

- ▶ Restoring Glade and Woodland Communities for Threatened Species in the Ozarks of Southeast Missouri, lead partner Missouri Department of Conservation
- ▶ Regional Grassland Bird and Grazing Lands Enhancement Initiative, lead partner Missouri Department of Conservation
- ▶ Missouri Targeted Conservation, lead partner Missouri Department of Natural Resources.

Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)

Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) is a voluntary program intended to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies while leveraging Federal investment in environmental enhancement and protection, in conjunction with agricultural production.

FY2019 CIG awards in Missouri

- ▶ FY19 competitive Conservation Innovation Grant to develop a soil health related testing procedures to identify selected soil characteristics. Smart Diagnostics. Expires September 2020.
- ▶ FY19 competitive Conservation Innovation Grant to implement and monitor grazing management on NWSG. The Nature Conservancy. Expires September 2021.

Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)

FY2020 CIG awards in Missouri

- ▶ \$150,000 in funding will be made available to fund new proposals in FY20.
- ▶ Maximum single award amount is limited to \$75,000 for this years awards.
- ▶ Announcement of Program Funding Opportunity for CIG will be made available in the coming weeks.

Conservation Technical Assistance Grants

Missouri NRCS annually requests proposals to leverage USDA funding and advance delivery of technical and financial assistance and conservation partnerships. Projects selected develop a grant or agreement, to implement the project or activities proposed.

Priority areas for funding are determined by the State Conservationist with input from the Leadership Team. Categories to apply currently include:

- 1) *Farm Bill Outreach and Conferences*
- 2) *Technical Workshops and/or Field Days with focus on Soil Health Strategies and/or Native Plant Community Adoption*
- 3) *Technical Assistance Cooperative Agreements*

- ▶ Missouri NRCS has a **total of 75 ongoing Grants and Agreements** with partners as of 3/20
- ▶ Ongoing Grant announcement. **USDA-NRCS-MO-MULTI-20-GEN0010652** Jan 27 - March 26, 2020
- ▶ <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=323915>

Questions?

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State Tech Committee - Natural Resources Subcommittee Meeting

Conservation Stewardship Program

March 11, 2020

United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service



Together We Can Do More

CONSERVATION
STEWARDSHIP
PROGRAM (CSP)



Conservation Planning

Your stewardship goals. *OUT* ASSISTANCE.

CSP Overview

Encourage producers to manage their resource concerns by

- Identifying and maintaining the existing level of conservation
- installing and adopting additional conservation
- “Reward” participants their current conservation
- “Inspire” them to go above and beyond.

CSP Overview

- Entire agricultural or Nonindustrial Private Forestland operation evaluated.
- 5 year contract length (with option to renew).
- Combination of eligibility and ranking determine priority for funding.
- Payments for existing conservation and additional conservation activities.

CSP Overview – 2018 Farm Bill

- CSP and EQIP remain separate and distinct.
- Converted CSP from an acre-based program to a funding-based program .
 - 2019 was first year for funding based CSP
- Interim rule published in Federal Register on November 12, 2019. Comments were due January 13, 2020
 - Email sent in November to State Technical Committee members with overview of changes in CSP with the 2018 Farm Bill and how to submit comments



CSP Overview – 2018 Farm Bill

- Establishes a \$200,000 payment limitation on all contracts entered into during FY 2019 through 2023.
- Establishes the new CSP Grassland Conservation Initiative (CSP-GCI).
 - Missouri obligated 654 contracts in FY19.
 - Missouri has obligated 319 contracts in FY20 to date.



FY19 CSP Update

CSP by the Numbers

2019 New Land Use Acres	National Rank - Applications (FY19)	National Rank - Contracts (FY19)
Cropland _____ 437,093	1. Mississippi _____ 1,880	1. Wisconsin _____ 545
Pasture _____ 221,003	2. Arkansas _____ 802	2. MISSOURI _____ 430
Non-Industrial Private Forest Land ____ 32,800	3. Minnesota _____ 720	3. Mississippi _____ 352
Associated Ag Land _____ 36,838	4. MISSOURI _____ 707	4. Iowa _____ 338
Farmstead _____ 8,149	5. Wisconsin _____ 610	5. Minnesota _____ 279

Missouri's Most Popular CSP Conservation Activities in 2019 (by Funding)



\$3.36 M

1,881 ac.

Establishing Monarch
Butterfly Habitat



\$566,682

21,342 ac.

Close Structures to
Capture/Retain Rainfall for
Waterfowl/Wading Birds



\$550,020

82,261 ac.

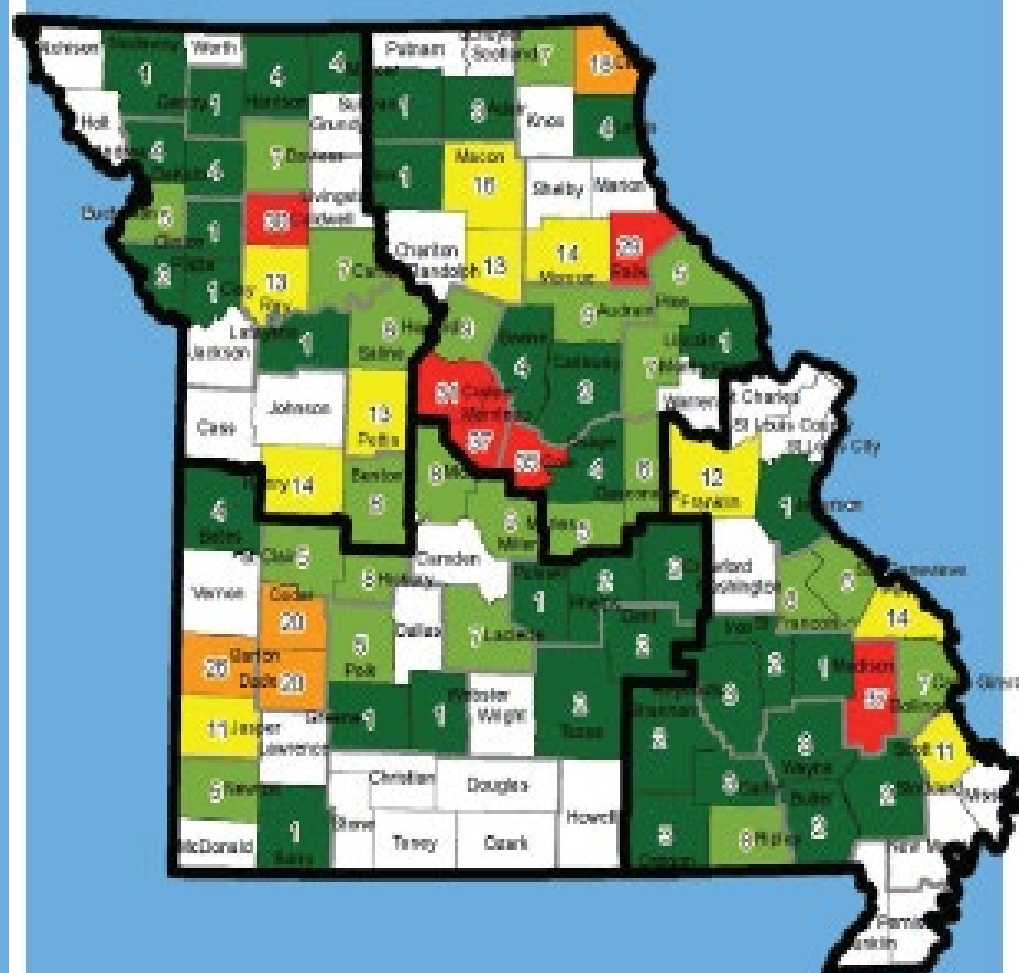
Reducing Ozone Precursors
Emissions Related to Pesticides
by Utilizing IPM PAS Techniques

Information represents both CSP and RCPP-CSP

Grassland Conservation Initiative

New for FY19, the 2018 Farm Bill authorized NRCS to enroll eligible producers into the CSP Grassland Conservation Initiative. CSP-GCI helps NRCS assist producers in protecting grazing land uses; conserving and improving soil, water and wildlife resources; and achieving related conservation values by conserving eligible land through grassland conservation contracts. Producers are awarded a five-year contract for the initiative at a rate of \$18 per acre each year. Missouri NRCS obligated more than \$2.5 million through 654 contracts on 27,800 acres.

FY19 CSP-GCI Contracts by County



CSP FY 2020

- CSP-GCI: Completed Sign-Up #2 and are currently working on obligating those applications received into contracts.
- CSP 2014 contracts are currently being processed for Renewal FY 20.
- CSP 2015 contracts are currently being processed for Renewal in either FY 20 or FY21.
- CSP 2016 contracts are currently being processed for Renewal FY 21.
- CSP Classic- Announcement for Sign-Up for FY 20 coming soon.

Seeking Input for FY21

Resource Categories

- Soil Quality Limitation
- Degraded Plant Condition
- Field Sediment, Nutrient, and Pathogen Loss
- Terrestrial Habitat
- Wind and Water Erosion
- Livestock Production Limitation
- Field Pesticide Loss
- Pest Pressure
- Concentrated Erosion
- Source Water Depletion
- Weather Resilience
- Storage and Handling of Pollutants
- Inefficient Energy Use
- Aquatic Habitat
- Air Quality Emissions
- Salt Losses to Water
- Fire Management

***Seeking Input for FY 2021 on 5 Priority Resources Categories
Please provide comments by March 27, 2020.***

Identified FY20 Priority Resource Categories

Thank You

Open Discussion

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Website: www.mo.nrcs.usda.gov



Twitter: NRCS_Missouri



YouTube: NRCSMissouri



GovDelivery: Text NRCS MOEvents to 468311
or enroll through Missouri NRCS website



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Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP) for Floodplain Easements (FPE) and Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

March 11, 2020 – Tracey Wiggins, Natural Resources Specialist

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Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP) for Floodplain Easements (FPE)



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EWP Floodplain Easements

Voluntary Perpetual Easement:

- Purchased by the Federal Government through USDA
- One-time easement payment.

Landowners retain fee title and rights to:

- Control of public access
- Undeveloped recreational use of land

Eligible Land:

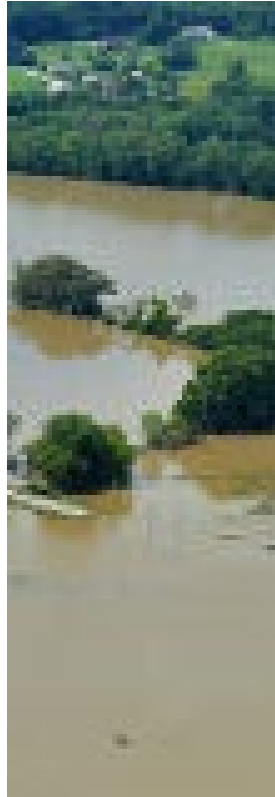
- Floodplain lands damaged by flooding once in previous calendar year.

or

- Floodplain lands damaged by flooding twice in previous 10 years.

Restoration on floodplain easements will:

- Include all necessary conservation practices required to restore the floodplain functions of the site.
- NRCS may pay up to 100 percent of the restoration costs.



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EWP Floodplain Easements



Sign-up:

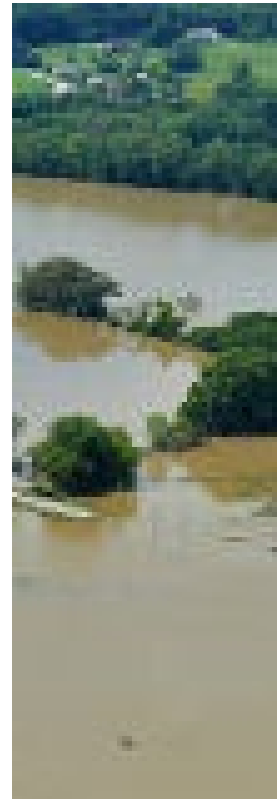
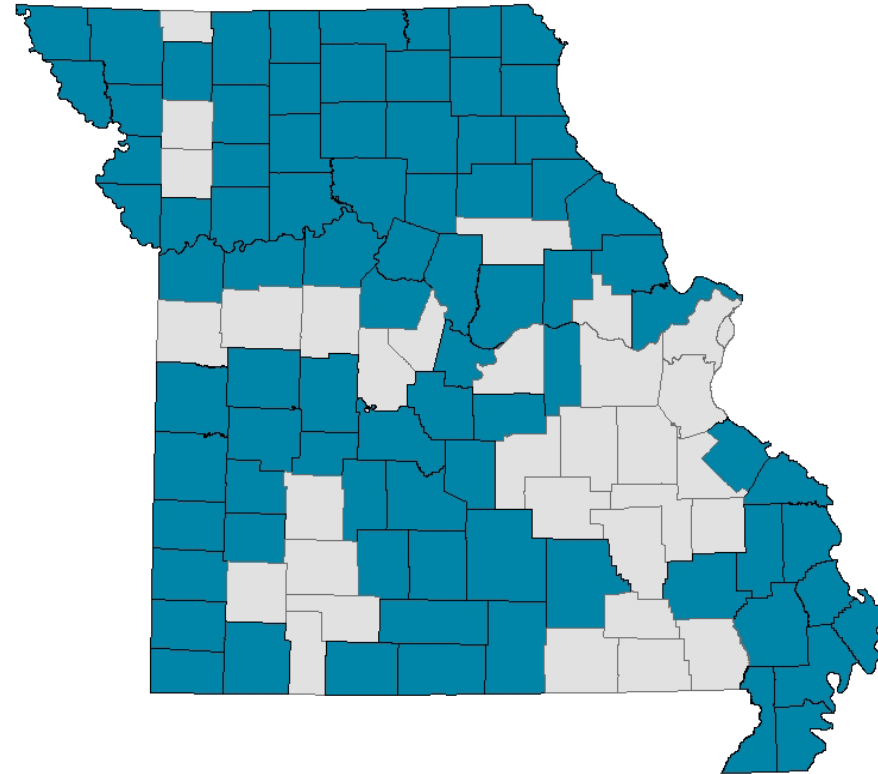
- Applications were accepted through November 27, 2019
- 150 applications were received
- \$100 million in need

Eligible Landowners:

- Landowners in 83 federally-declared disaster counties

Current Funding Available in MO:

- \$9.7 million



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EWP Floodplain Easements



Ranking:

- Ranking criteria used was reviewed and approved at both the state and national level
- Group applications
- All 150 applications are ranked
- With the current allocation, Missouri would be able to fund 13 applications
 - National Review is pending
 - National Review determines if the application will move forward
 - Title Search and Environmental Search



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EWP Floodplain Easements

Next steps prior to enrollment:

- Title Search Review
- Environmental Search Review
- Submission to NHQ (funding)
- Intent to Continue to Landowner
- Submission to Office of General Counsel (legal)
- Submission to Internal Controls (enrollment)
- Letter to Landowner



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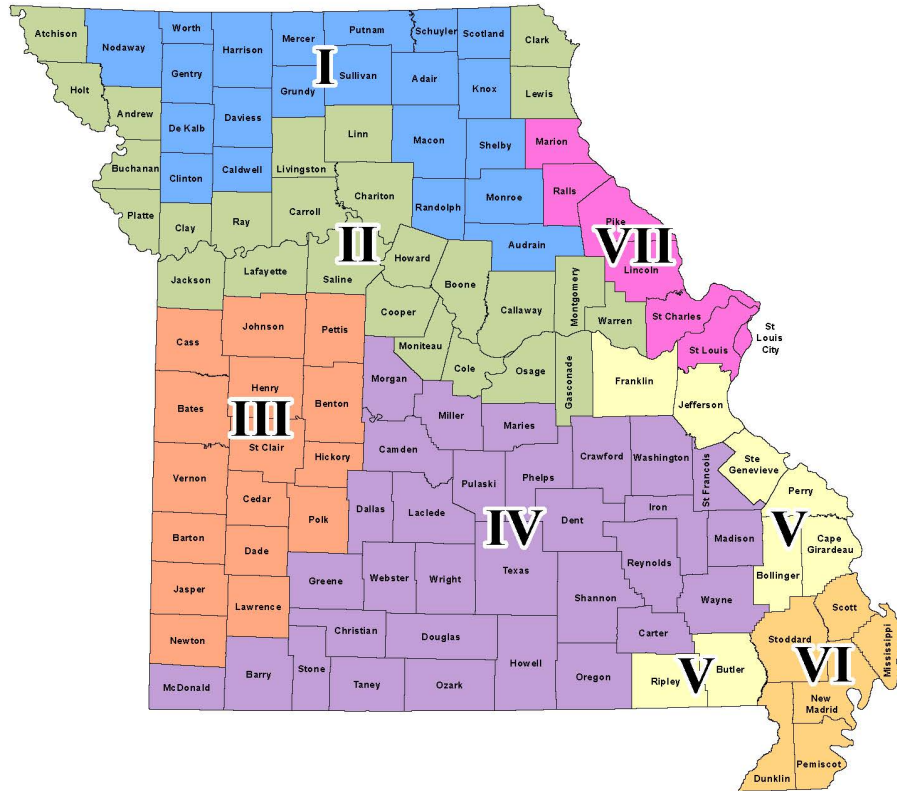
Easement Compensation



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FPE Easement Compensation



2020 ACEP-WRE & EWPP-FPE Missouri Geographic Regions for Rate Cap Determinations

2020 Maximum Payment Rate
for each Region ***

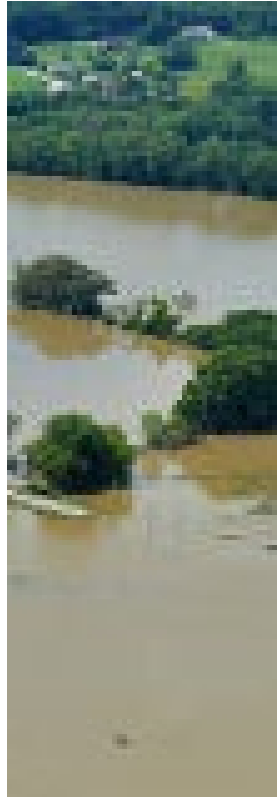
	Acres	Cropland	Other**
I	<= 1,000	\$3795	\$2565
I	> 1,000	Appraisal*	Appraisal*
II	<= 1,050	\$4200	\$2610
II	> 1,050	Appraisal*	Appraisal*
III	<= 350	\$3090	\$2185
III	> 350	Appraisal*	Appraisal*
IV	<= 1,200	\$2630	\$1890
IV	> 1,200	Appraisal*	Appraisal*
V	<= 350	\$5000	\$1890
V	> 350	Appraisal*	Appraisal*
VI	<= 450	\$5000	\$1885
VI	> 450	Appraisal*	Appraisal*
VII	<= 1,000	\$4700	\$3330
VII	> 1,000	Appraisal*	Appraisal*

*Appraisal - 95% of appraised
Fair Market Value not to
exceed \$5,000.

**Other - includes woodland,
pasture, and open water.

***Note: The conservation
easement value will be
the lower of:

- fair market value
- geographic rate cap
- landowner offer





United States Department of Agriculture

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program



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ACEP



Agricultural Land Easements (ACEP-ALE)

- NRCS provides funds to eligible entities for the purchase of agricultural land easements.
- **Eligible Entity holds the easement**
- **US obtains a 3rd party right of enforcement**
- Eligible Entity responsible for monitoring, management, and enforcement

Wetland Reserve Easements (ACEP-WRE)

- NRCS purchases easements directly from private and Tribal landowners through a reserved interest deed in eligible land to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands and associated lands.
- **US holds the easement**
- NRCS responsible for monitoring, management, and enforcement



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Agricultural Conservation Easement Program – Agricultural Land Easements



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ACEP – ALE

Topics

- Update
- Program Changes
- Ranking
- Application Cut-off Date



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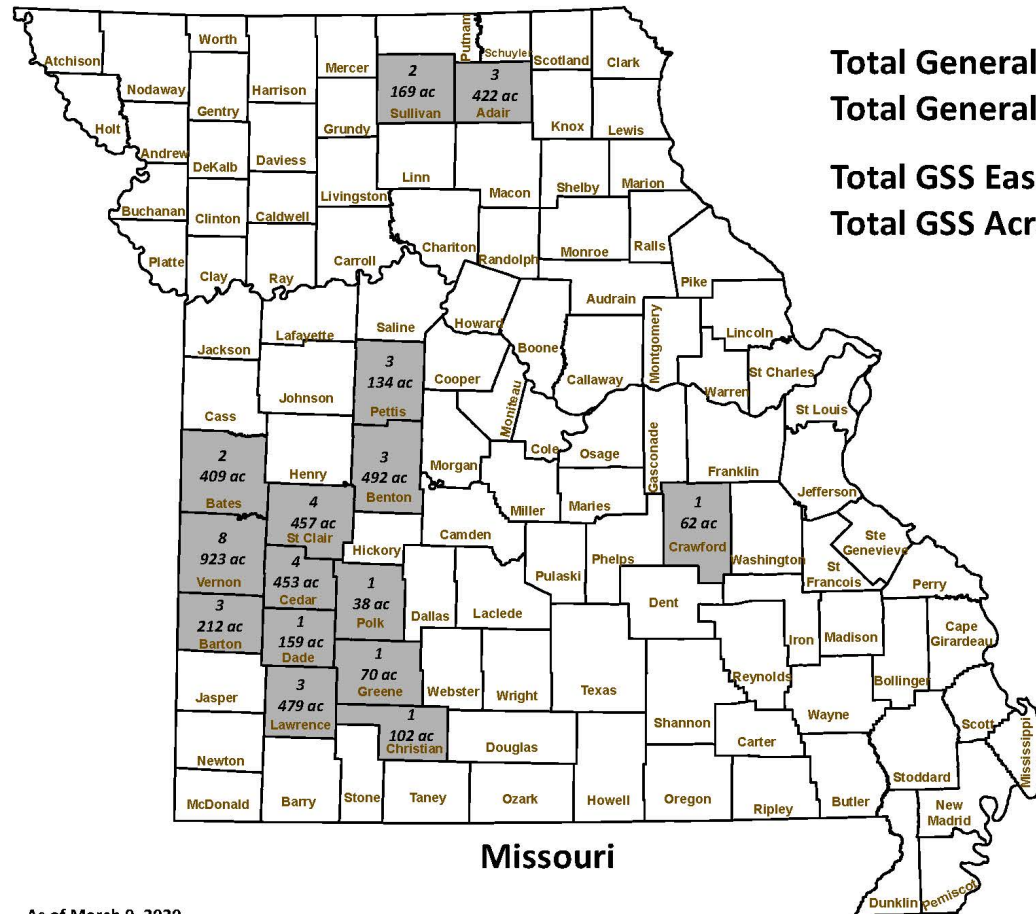
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ACEP-ALE



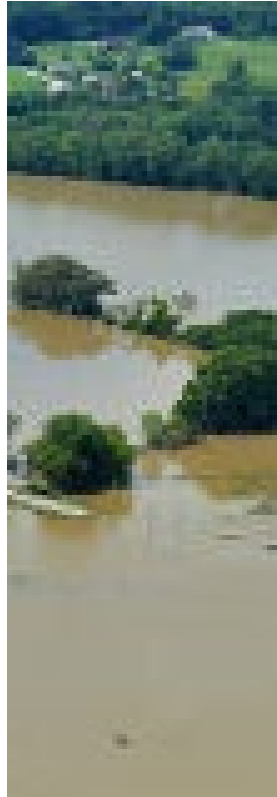
ACEP-ALE Easements by County



Total General Easements: 3
Total General Acres: 234
Total GSS Easements: 36
Total GSS Acres: 4,160

Missouri

As of March 9, 2020



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ACEP – ALE

Program Requirements (2014 FB):

–NRCS

- Federal Share limited to 50% (General) or 75% (GSS)

–Cooperating Entity

- Stewardship Program
- Hold, Monitor, and Enforce Easements
- Agreement in place with a landowner(s)
- Cash Match



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ACEP – ALE

Program Requirements (2018 FB):

–NRCS

- Federal Share limited to 50% (General) or 75% (GSS)

–Cooperating Entity

- Stewardship Program
- Hold, Monitor, and Enforce Easements
- Agreement in place with a landowner(s)
- Non-federal share (cash match not required)



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ACEP – ALE



Calculating the Non-Federal Share:

1. Eligible entity's cash contribution toward easement payment to landowner
 - No longer a minimum required amount
2. Landowner's donation or charitable contribution reducing easement price
3. Procured costs paid by eligible entity's for certain easement acquisition-related expenses, or
4. Eligible entity's costs for monitoring and stewardship (up to 2% of FMV of the easement)

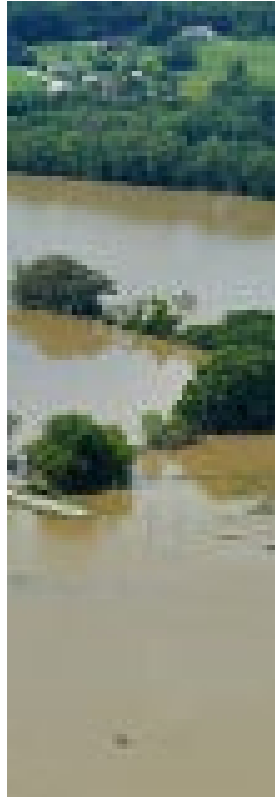
1+2 = Federal Share

- This will be true for most transactions

If 1+2 = less than Federal Share, add 3

- Receipts required for procured items included in non-Fed share

If 1+2+3 = less than Federal Share, add 4



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ACEP – ALE

Ranking:

- Required to create a ranking pool for each ALE component (General/GSS)
- Total Points must equal 400
- 50% points from National Criteria
- 50% points from State Criteria
- CART



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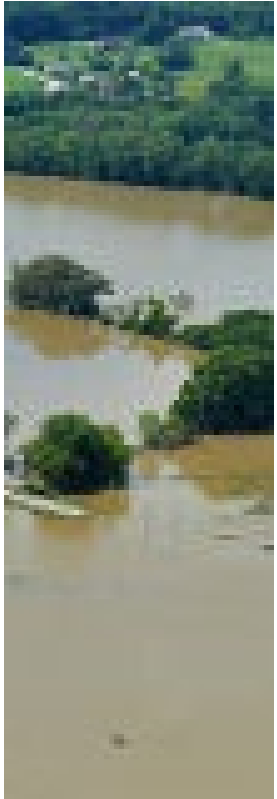
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ACEP – ALE

Application Cut-off:

- April 10, 2020



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Agricultural Conservation Easement Program – Wetland Reserve Program



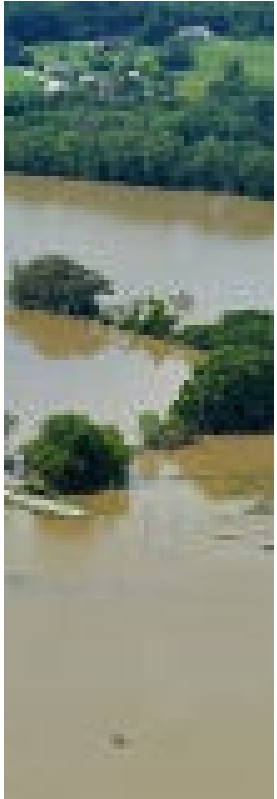
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ACEP – WRE

Topics

- 2019 Update
- Ranking Changes
- Ranking Pools



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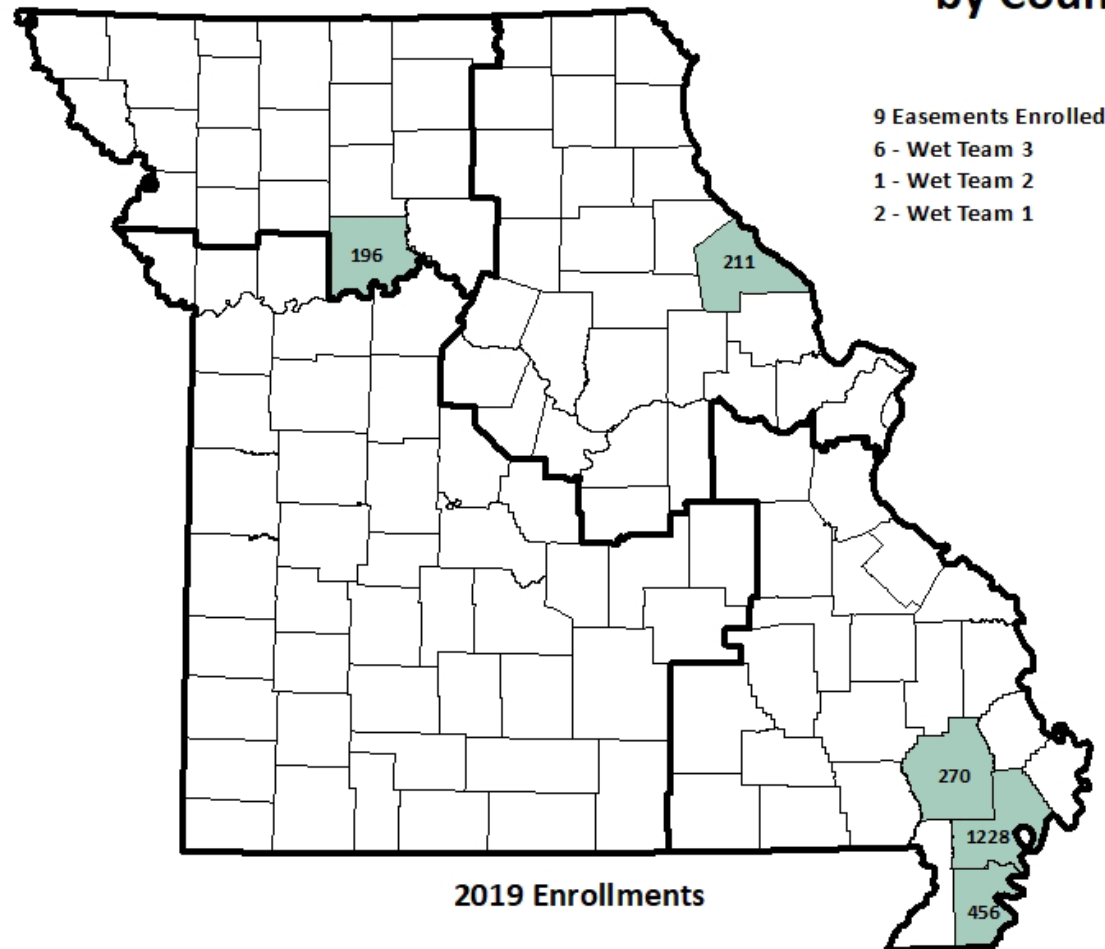
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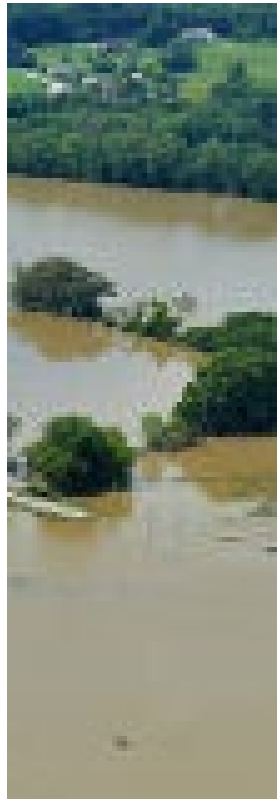
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ACEP-WRE Enrollments by County



9 Easements Enrolled
 6 - Wet Team 3
 1 - Wet Team 2
 2 - Wet Team 1



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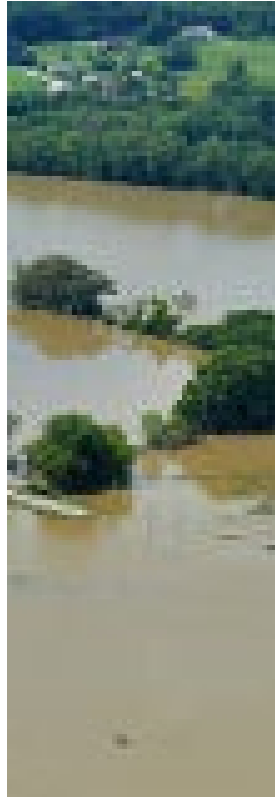
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ACEP – WRE

Ranking Changes:

- CART
- Allowed to utilize ranking pools
- Total points must equal 400
- Points will be given if the proposed easement intersects a Source Water Priority Watershed
- Adding criteria to assess the environmental benefits of enrolling the land:
 - Habitat that will be restored for the benefit of migratory birds and wetland-dependent wildlife species
 - Carbon sequestration
 - Improvement to climate change resiliency



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ACEP – WRE



Ranking Pools:

2018 FB provides specific language regarding the development and use of Ranking Pools

Part 528, Subpart L, Section 528.111(A):

(4) The State Conservationist may develop multiple sets of ranking factors or establish ranking pools to address variability in wetland types offered for enrollment. The development of multiple sets of ranking factors or ranking pools may be necessary to facilitate enrollment of diverse wetland habitat types that otherwise may be difficult to compare within a single set of ranking criteria. Ranking pools also allow flexibility to ensure priority wetland habitat types that would not compete as well with other wetland habitat types may still be selected.



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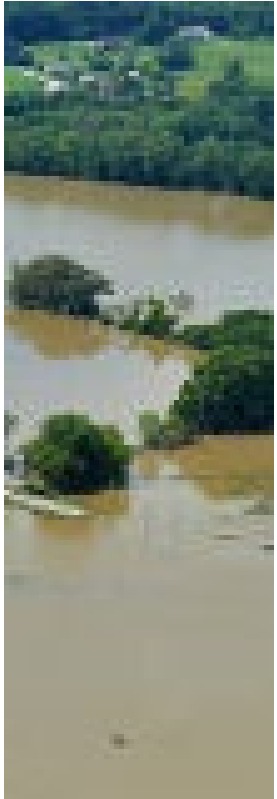
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2020 Allocation:

- \$9.4 million
 - 85% new enrollments
 - 15% stewardship

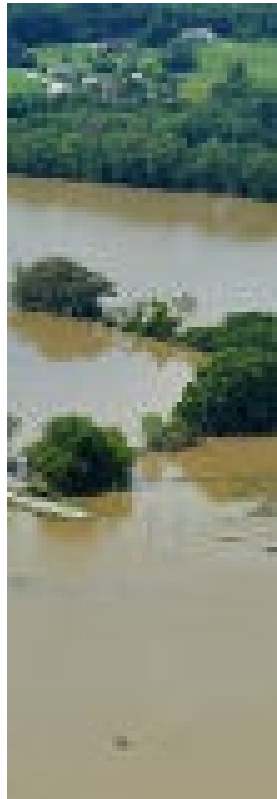
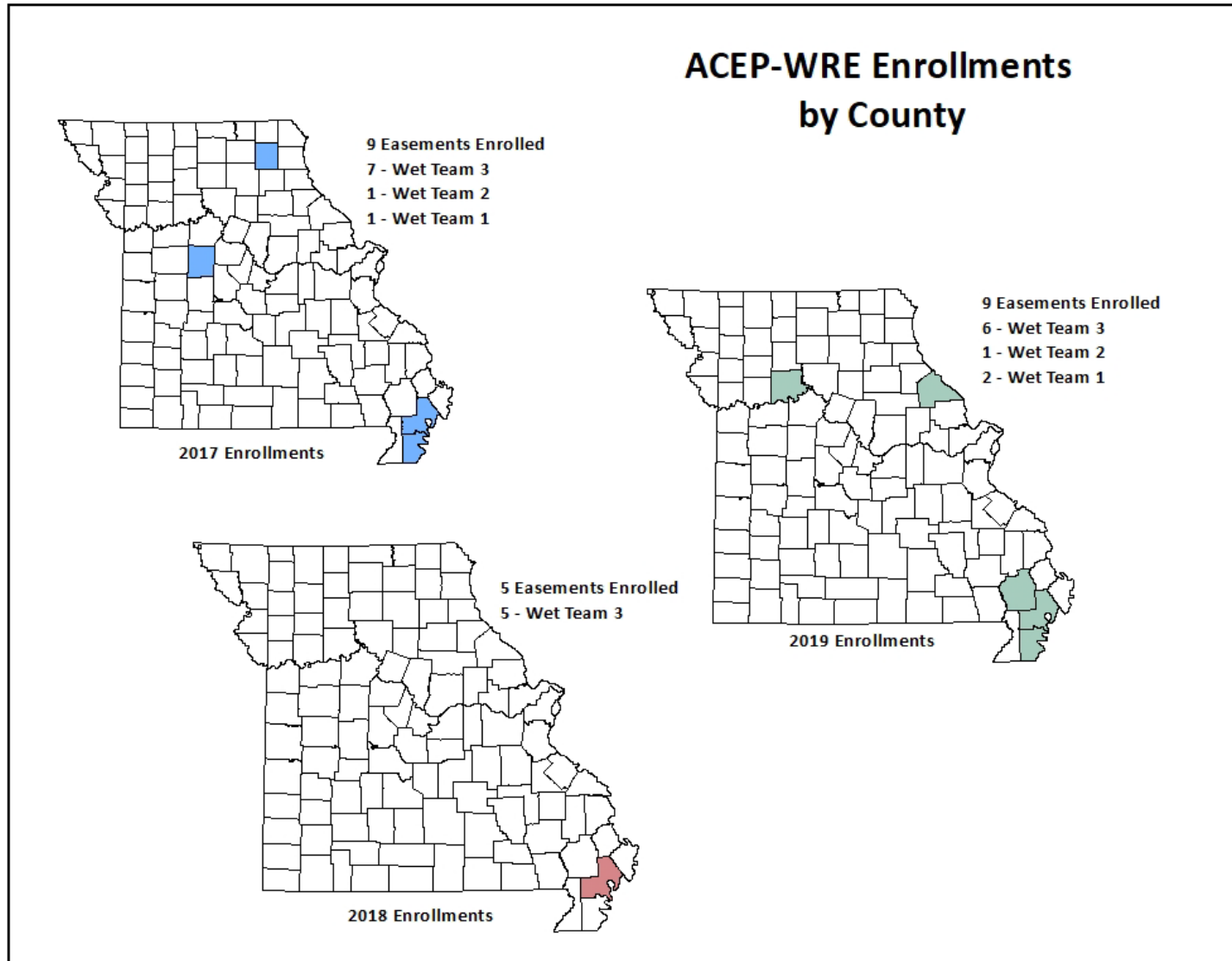


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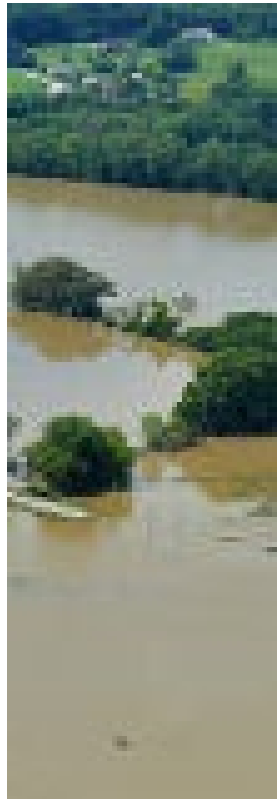
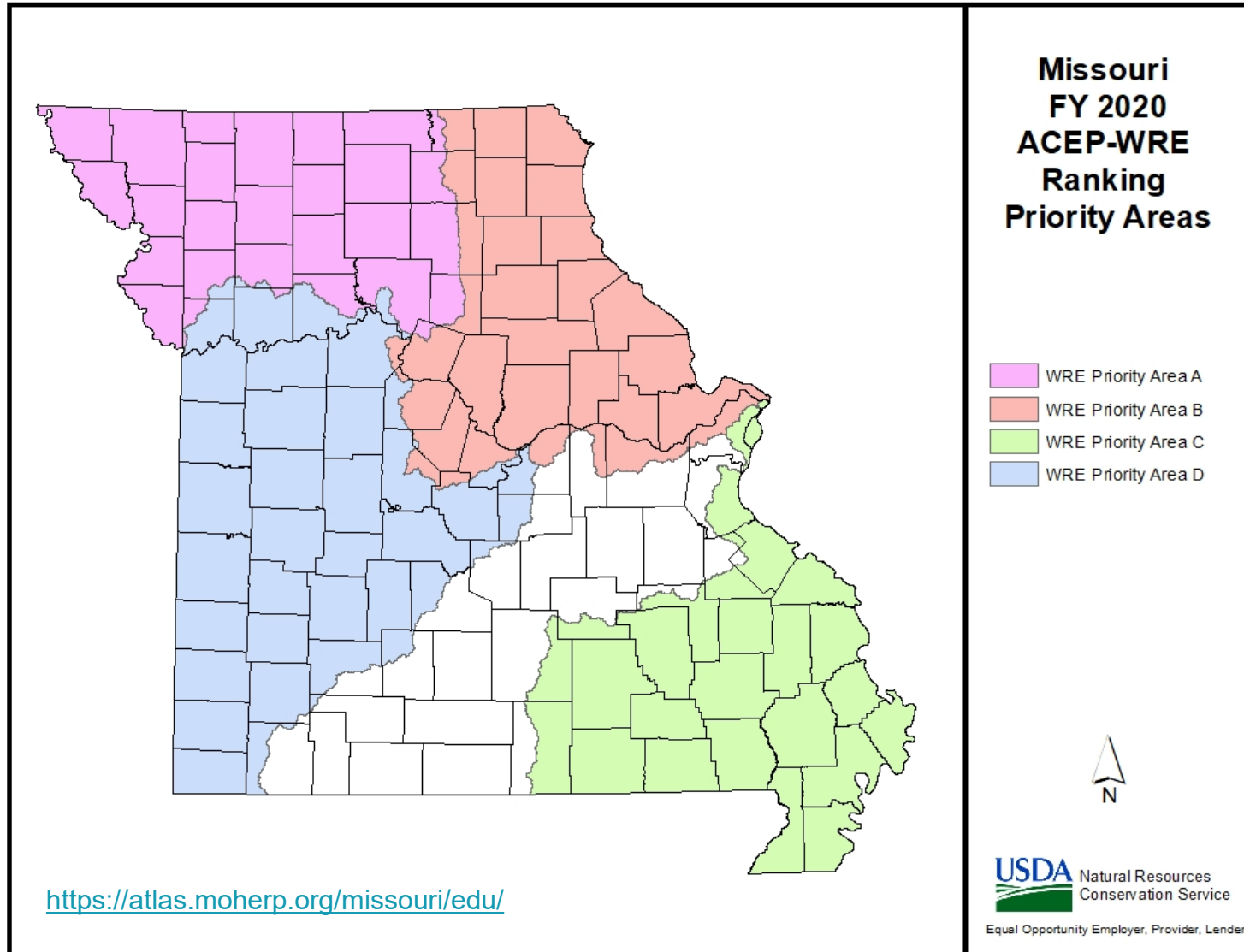


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ACEP – WRE

Application Cut-off:

- April 10, 2020



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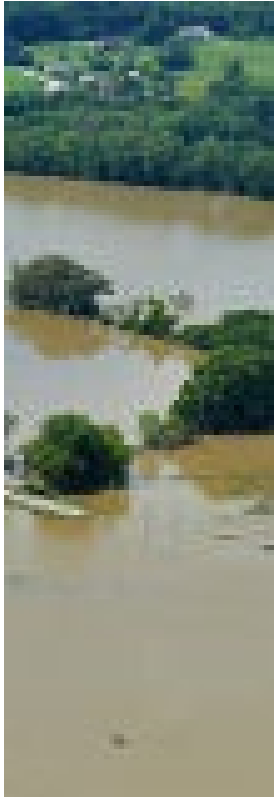
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Questions?



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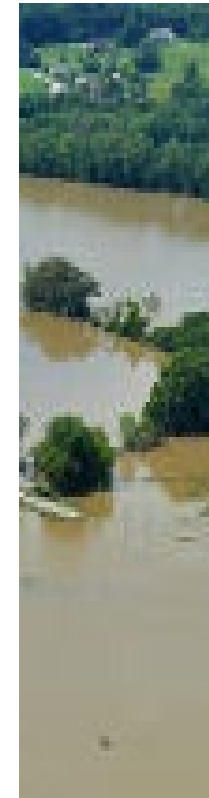


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Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP)

Natural Resources Conservation Service - MISSOURI



Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP)

The Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP) was set up by Congress to respond to emergencies created by natural disasters. It is designed to relieve imminent hazards to life and property caused by floods, fires, windstorms and other natural occurrences. The purpose of EWP is to help groups of people with a common problem. It is generally not an individual assistance program. All projects undertaken must be sponsored by a political subdivision of the State, such as a city, county, general improvement district or conservation district. The United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is responsible for administering the program.

EWP in Missouri

Federal funds for EWP assistance may cover up to 75 percent of the construction costs for most restoration measures including levee repair, logjam removal, streambank stabilization near roads, bridges and buildings and sediment removal from drainage ditches.

Eligibility

Public and private landowners are eligible for assistance but must be represented by a project sponsor.

Project Sponsor Responsibilities

Sponsors are responsible for providing landrights to do repair work and securing the necessary permits. Sponsors are also responsible for furnishing the local cost share and for accomplishing the installation of work. The work can be done either through federal or local contracts.



Criteria for Assistance

All EWP work must reduce threats to life and property. Furthermore, it must be economically and environmentally defensible and sound from an engineering standpoint. EWP work must yield benefits to more than one person.

Applying for Assistance

If you feel that your area has suffered severe damage and may qualify under the EWP program, you are encouraged to contact your local general improvement district or county supervisor to request assistance. City and

EWP Floodplain Easement

NRCS purchases floodplain easements on lands that qualify for EWP assistance. Floodplain easements restore, protect, maintain and enhance the functions of the floodplain; conserve natural values including fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, floodwater retention, groundwater recharge and open space; reduce long-term federal disaster assistance; and safeguard lives and property from floods, drought and the products of erosion.

Land Eligibility

NRCS may purchase EWP easements on any floodplains that have been impaired within the last 12 months or that have a history of repeated flooding (at least twice over the past 10 years).

Floodplain Restoration

To the extent practicable, NRCS actively restores the natural features and characteristics of the flood plain through re-creating the topographic diversity, increasing the duration of inundation and saturation and providing for re-establishment of native vegetation.

Landowner Use

Landowners retain several rights to property, including quiet enjoyment, the right to control public access and the right to underdeveloped recreational use such as hunting and fishing.

county governments, general improvement districts, conservation districts and tribal governments are the most common sponsors of EWP projects.

The sponsor's application should be in the form of a letter signed by an official of the sponsoring organization. The letter should include information on the nature, location and scope of the problem for which assistance is requested. Information is available from NRCS offices to explain the eligibility requirements for the EWP program. Send applications for assistance to your local USDA Service Center, NRCS Field Office or your NRCS State Office.

Who to Contact

For more information about the EWP program, visit your local NRCS office.

To locate the USDA Service Center nearest you, visit <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>.

Missouri NRCS
State Conservation Engineer
Phone: 573-876-0910



The before-and-after photos above show EWP work to repair damage at the Highway 38 bridge over Greasy Creek in Dallas County.



Missouri

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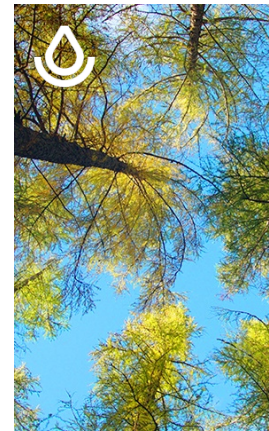


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Emergency Watershed Protection Program - EWPP

March, 11 2020

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The EWP Program is USDA NRCS's primary method of providing financial and technical assistance to help communities recover from sudden watershed impairments caused by natural disasters.

- Natural disasters can be of several types:
 - **Floods**
 - Fire
 - Drought
 - Windstorms
 - Earthquakes
- Recovery measures must reduce threats to life or property
- Must be economically, environmentally, and socially defensible
- Includes Recovery Assistance and Floodplain Easements
- Recovery Assistance must be through eligible project sponsors



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Typical repairs include:

- Levee repair
 - Non-Federal,
 - Non USACE PL-84-99 eligible levees or
 - Non-FEMA Public Assistance eligible levees
- Sediment removal from drainage ditches
- Streambank stabilization near roads, bridges and buildings
- Logjam removal from channels



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Eligible Sponsors:

- State Governments
- Cities
- Towns
- Counties/Parishes
- Districts organized under State law (i.e. Drainage, Levee, Irrigation . . .)
- Municipal Authorities
- Native American Tribes and Tribal organization



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Sponsor Responsibilities:

- Make application for EWP Assistance (60 days)
- Obtain Land rights
- Secure Permits
- Provide design services (optional)
- Administer local contract for repairs or do the work with own Forces
- Provide sponsor contribution - 25% of Construction Cost (10% LRA)
- Complete post project Operation and Maintenance (O&M)



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Eligible Measures:

- **Reduce threat to life or property**
- Provide protection from additional flooding or erosion
- Remove debris that affects runoff or erosion
- Restore hydraulic capacity to channels
- Disposal of animal carcasses when carcasses meet the definition of debris
- Repair of damaged PL 83-156, PL 83-566, PL 78-534 or PL 97-98 structures (*NRCS Watershed Programs*)
- **Are economically, socially, and environmentally defensible and technically sound**



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Non-Eligible Measures:



- Providing assistance on any Federal lands
- Providing assistance to Federal Aid Highways
- Repairing the same structure more the 2 times in 10 years
- Performing normal O&M activities
- Correcting pre-disaster damage
- Repairing transportation facilities
- **Repairing levees on channels with more than 400 square miles of drainage area or systems active in the PL 84-99 program (MOU USACE)**
- Increasing capacity or protection level



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Performance Time:

- Exigent Situations
 - Loss of life or property is imminent
 - Expedited application and approval
 - 10 days to complete work from funding

- Non-Exigent Situations
 - Threat to life and property is not imminent
 - 220 days to complete work from funding



EWP Assistance Process:



Disaster Declaration

EWPP Activated
(EDR)

Coordinate with
FEMA
(Stafford Act)
and Other Partners

Sponsor Requests Assistance

Damage Survey
Report
(DSR)

DSR Review and
Approval

Funding Allocated
for the DSR

Cooperative Agreement with Sponsor

Plans, Permits and
Land Rights

Work is Completed

Sponsor is
Reimbursed
for approved costs

Project Closeout



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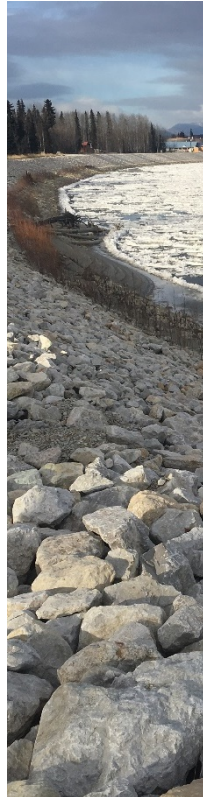
EWP Applications 2019



132 applications for assistance from Sponsors

133 approved Damage Survey Reports (projects)

- \$35 Million Damage (\$26 Million in Financial Assistance)
- 55 Levee Systems
- 50 Drainage Systems
- 26 Streambank Stabilization
- 1 Logjam Debris Removal
- 1 PL-566 Project (Dams)



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MISSOURI STATE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Natural Resource Subcommittee

Parkade Plaza, Columbia, Missouri

March 11, 2020

Please address comments/remarks by March 27th, 2020 to:

USDA/Natural Resource Conservation Service
Grover DePriest, Acting State Conservationist
601 Business Loop 70 West
Parkade Plaza Suite 250
Columbia MO, 65203
Phone: (573) 876-0901

Email: grover.depriest@usda.gov
Website: <http://www.mo.nrcs.usda.gov/>

USDA/Farm Agency
Kim Viers, Acting State Executive Director
601 Business Loop 70 West
Parkade Plaza Suite 225
Columbia MO, 65203
Phone: (573) 876-0925

Email: kim.viers@usda.gov
Website: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mo>

MO State Technical Committee: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/mo/technical/stc/>



Natural Resources Conservation Service

NRCS Commonly Used Acronyms

CY: Calendar Year

FY: Fiscal Year

Subaccount: Funding pools developed for similar program applications by land use, geographic, or applicant specific parameters.

RFP: Request for Proposals

Current Programs and Initiatives

ACEP: Agriculture Conservation Easement Program

- **ALE:** Agricultural Land Easement
- **WRE:** Wetlands Reserve Easement

CSP: Conservation Stewardship Program

- **CSP – Reinvention:** describes updated program logic adopted with FY-2017 General sign-up.

CSP-GCI: Conservation Stewardship Program-Grassland Conservation Initiative

CIG: Conservation Innovation Grant

EQIP: Environmental Quality Incentives Program

- **CIG:** Conservation Innovation Grants
- **MRBI:** Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative
- **NWQI:** National Water Quality Initiative
- **OHRP:** Joint Chief's Ozark Highland Restoration Project Initiative
- **StrikeForce:** Initiative on-going in 26 states, including Missouri, to ensure USDA agency programs are made available to designated high poverty counties
- **Monarch:** Monarch Butterfly Habitat Development Project
- **EOF:** Edge of Field Monitoring

HEL: Highly Erodible Land

RCPP: Regional Conservation Partnership Program

EWPP: Emergency Watershed Protection Program

EWP-FPE: Emergency Watershed Protection-Floodplain Easement Program

SWPA: Source Water Protection Area