

Exhibit P – FY 2018 RCPP Driftless Area Habitat for the Wild & Rare Phase 2

Initiative Name and Acronym – RCPP Driftless Area Habitat for the Wild & Rare Phase 2 (DAHWR)

Initiative Description/Summary:

The Driftless Area (DA) (SE Minnesota, SW Wisconsin, NE Iowa and NW Illinois) was bypassed by the last continental glacier and features steep valleys, sandstone bluffs and more than 600 unique spring-fed creeks and ridges once covered in prairie and scattered oaks. This ancient landscape supports a variety of plants and animals, including dozens of uncommon species of birds of woodland and grassland habitats, reptiles and amphibians, and abundant populations of native fish found in the high concentration of cold-water streams. The DA's diversity of habitat provides critical habitat for dozens of species of concern in the State Wildlife Action Plans and has been cited as one of North America's most important resources. Early European settlement and agricultural practices took a heavy toll on the DA, resulting in devastating erosion and serious damage to rivers. Land use practices and conservation efforts have helped heal the land, but the legacy of the past damage is still visible in the sediment-filled valleys, and steep eroding stream banks. For the past 10 years Trout Unlimited's Driftless Area Restoration Effort has been working with partners to restore structural diversity, ecological function and overall health of cold-water streams and the riparian corridors. RCPP funding will provide a new comprehensive, targeted regional approach to restoring cold-water streams and their riparian areas for the benefit of the many at-risk species.

Through RCPP, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) offers financial assistance to agricultural producers to implement on-farm conservation practices. Eligible land is determined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and is based on an identified resource concern. Eligible producers may apply for financial assistance on conservation practices that will address the identified resource concerns in the project area.

Producers located within the Iowa “RCPP 2018 Driftless Area Habitat for the Wild & Rare Phase 2 (see [Exhibit Q1](#) – FY 2018 **Map**) project area are eligible to participate in the project. Planned conservation practices to address an identified resource concern must be located within the project area to be eligible for financial assistance consideration through this project.

Participating Counties:

Allamakee, Buchanan, Chickasaw, Clayton, Clinton, Delaware, Dubuque, Fayette, Howard, Jackson, Jones, and Winnebago Counties.

Program Contact Information:

Paul Goldsmith at (515) 323-2224 or paul.goldsmith@ia.usda.gov.

Project Financial Assistance through EQIP:

- Iowa EQIP Financial Assistance is \$750,000

ProTracts Requirements:

1. Subaccount Guidance:

One subaccount is available in ProTracts to support this Initiative under RCPP EQIP 2014 titled “Trout Unlimited RCPP Driftless Area Habitat for the Wild and Rare Phase 2.”

Batching Dates will be the regular EQIP Batching Dates and will be placed on the Iowa NRCS Website.

2. Application, Evaluation, and Ranking Tool Guidance – Choice Lists and Matrix Data:

- a. Approved Land Types – Riparian Corridors of Coldwater streams in the following applicable land types are eligible for this initiative:

Crop
Pasture

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Forest
Farmstead
Associated Ag Land

b. RCPP Application Type - National

c. Approved Natural Resource Concerns:

Water Quality Degradation – Excessive Sediment in Surface Water
Excessive Sediment in Surface Water

Fish and Wildlife – Inadequate Habitat
Inadequate Habitat – Cover/Shelter
Inadequate Habitat – Continuity (Space)

Note: No additional resource concerns may be added or used in ProTracts AERT to support this initiative.

d. For this initiative the current FY EQIP Cost List will be used for the Eligible Practices listed below with Initiative Payment Rates.

Core Conservation Practices (Initiative and Initiative HU Payment Rates)

Practice Name	Practice Code
Filter Strip	393
Stream Habitat Improvement and Management	395
Wetland Restoration	657

Supporting Conservation Practices (Initiative and Initiative HU Payment Rates)

Can only be contracted as a supporting practice to a stream restoration project.

Practice Name	Practice Code
Access Road	560
Clearing and Snagging	326
Conservation Cover	327
Critical Area Planting	342
Fence	382
Field Border	386
Grade Stabilization Structure	410
Grassed Waterway	412
Lined Waterway or Outlet	468
Mulching	484
Obstruction Removal	500
Stream Crossing	578
Streambank and Shoreline Protection	580
Structure for Water Control	587
Structures for Wildlife	649
Underground Outlet	620

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- e. The current FY 20XX EQIP Cost List will be uploaded into ProTracts for the RCPP Projects each fiscal year. This Cost List will be provided to the Field Office to be loaded into Toolkit.
- f. All applications will be screened using the Iowa FY 2018 RCPP Driftless Area Habitat for the Wild & Rare Phase 2 *Screening Criteria Worksheet*. This Screening Criteria Worksheet is posted on the Iowa NRCS Website. Based on the screening all applications will be assigned either a High, Medium or Low Priority.

3. **Application, Evaluation, and Ranking Tool Guidance – Ranking Criteria Questions:**

Ranking will be uploaded into ProTracts each fiscal year. Existing National and State EQIP General ranking questions will be used. Local EQIP questions (350 points) are as follows.

Sub-heading Number	Question Number	Question	Points
1		WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION – Excessive Sediment in Surface Water	
	1	Application area is located in the Riparian area within the Driftless Catchment Area draining into Designated Coldwater Stream (Use <u>Exhibit Q2</u> – FY 2018 Driftless Area Habitat For the Wild and Rare Phase 2 Map to determine – yellow shaded areas)	100
	2	Application will address a source of significant streambank erosion. Significant is defined as 20% or more of streambank length on project site requires use of scenarios under Practice 580.	80
2		FISH & WILDLIFE – Inadequate Habitat	
	1	Application includes instream or riparian habitat practices (CPS 395 Stream Habitat Improvement and Management) to benefit non-game species.	75
	2	Application includes instream or riparian habitat practices (CPS 657 Wetland Restoration) to benefit non-game species.	60
	3	Application includes instream or riparian habitat practices (CPS 649 Structures for Wildlife) to benefit non-game species.	15
3		OTHER	
	1	OTHER: A perpetual public access easement is already established on the project site.	20
		TOTAL	350

4. **Additional Initiative Guidance:**

The primary project partner for this project is Trout Unlimited.

Jeff Hastings, Trout Unlimited Project Manager, is the contact at Jeff.Hastings@tu.org.

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Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
SCREENING CRITERIA WORKSHEET

A screening worksheet will be completed for each eligible RCPP application.

Instructions: Complete a screening worksheet for each eligible producer applying for RCPP EQIP Driftless Area Habitat for the Wild and Rare Phase 2 assistance. Completion of this worksheet and documentation does not constitute agreement to provide EQIP benefits nor approval of a program contract. The original screening worksheet should be filed with the applicant case file or EQIP file and unless the application is determined to be ineligible, the screening priority (high, medium, and low) will be recorded in ProTracts application priority. A copy of any completed screening worksheet may be provided to the applicant.			
Detailed Screening Criteria Worksheet – Complete for each eligible EQIP applicant			
Applicant Name:		County:	
Application No:		Field Office:	
Evaluator Name:		Date:	
Priority Determination for ProTracts – Select and circle one:			
High Priority Category: Application area is located within the Driftless Catchment area or the HUC 12 Areas draining into designated Coldwater streams [Use <u>Exhibit Q2</u> – FY 2018 Driftless Area Habitat for the Wild and Rare Phase 2 map to determine, i.e., yellow or green shaded areas], and application includes at least one core conservation practice.		High Priority Status in Protracts	
Medium Priority Category: Application is located within the Driftless area but not within a Driftless Catchment area or HUC 12 Areas draining into designated Coldwater streams, [Use <u>Exhibit Q2</u> – FY 2018 Driftless Area Habitat for the Wild and Rare Phase 2 map to determine, i.e., yellow or green shaded areas], and includes the conservation practice Stream Habitat Improvement and Management (395).		Medium Priority Status in ProTracts	
Low Priority Category: Application does not meet any of the criteria above - Low priority applications will not be ranked.		Low Priority Status in ProTracts	
The priority determination of high, medium, or low will be recorded in ProTracts application priority for this applicant.			
D.C. Approval:		Date Approve:	