

State Technical Committee (STC) Meeting
October 27, 2022, at 10 a.m.
Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

10:00 – 10:35	Welcome and Opening Remarks	Dr. Edwin Martinez, State Conservationist
10:35 – 10:50	FY22 Programs Update Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Source Water Protection Areas (SWPA)	Patrick Vincent, ASTC-Programs
10:50 – 11:00	Urban Agriculture Activities and People's Garden Initiative, State Technical Subcommittee Update	Patrick Vincent, ASTC-Programs & Chad Wentz, SRC
11:00 – 11:05	Watershed Programs and Rehabilitation Emergency Watershed Program (EWP) Buchanan County	Mat Lyons, State Conservation Engineer
11:05 – 11:15	Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)	Tara Bowley, Acting FSA Programs Specialist
11:15 – 11:30	Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) Updates on State Wildlife Action Plan, funding, priorities, PLB agreement, etc.	Jenn Allen, Wildlife Division Asst. Chief Jay Howell, Small Game Project Co-Leader
11:30 – 11:45	Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR) Chesapeake Bay Update, WIP goals progress, Ag Needs Assessment, funding, priorities, etc.	James Martin, Division of Soil and Water Conservation Director
11:45- 11:55	Questions and Answer Session	ALL
11:55 – 12:00	Closing Remarks	Dr. Edwin Martinez, State Conservationist

Next Meeting – TBD

State Technical Committee Meeting

October 27, 2022, at 10:00 a.m.

Virtual Meeting *via* Microsoft Teams

Microsoft Teams Logistics by Chad Wentz, State Resource Conservationist

The final agenda and PowerPoint slides were sent earlier to the State Technical Committee members this morning.

Welcome and opening remarks by Dr. Edwin Martinez Martinez, Virginia NRCS State Conservationist

- Agency priorities – Virginia has successfully implemented all priorities
- Equity action plan – NRCS is taking a lead on this
- Climate Smart – NRCS has done a significant amount of work to implement
 - o 17 projects and Virginia received top funding of \$70-90 million
- Onboarding of new team members
 - o ASTC for Partnerships and Initiatives on January 1st
 - o Outreach Coordinator, Telicia Berry, is on board
- Soil Health Coalition – 4theSoil is doing training in October and November
- 10-11 Pathways and recent grad positions just opened in USAjobs
 - o Please help us promote these opportunities.
- Education and outreach
 - o Thanks to everyone working with us
- Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) – There will be significant opportunities for NRCS
 - o This is the single largest investment in climate and clean energy solutions in American history.
 - o \$20 billion to support NRCS conservation programs
 - o We will need collaboration and coordination efforts and depend on conservation partners to help us deliver funding that will come from the IRA.
- We will work to improve staffing capacity – students, recent grads, and other team members.
 - o Some engineering positions have just been posted on USAjobs

Questions by Sylvia Malm – “When will Inflation Reduction Act monies be appropriated and available?” and “How can we collaborate with you to help collaborate taking advantage of those funds especially for source water protection?”

- o Working to understand authorities and how we’ll use the authorities internally
- o Funding in 2023 won’t be as significant as in 2024 just because of the planning phase – no specific timing but hoping for better guidance by second quarter of the fiscal year.
- o The new Farm Bill is being written.
- o Opportunities for staffing capacity, agreements for implementation, and technical assistance, opportunities for partnerships

We will share more details as soon as we have them.

Programs Update by Patrick Vincent

- Accomplishment highlights of FY22
 - o EQIP – More money was obligated than last year and ~90 more contracts than last year
 - o CSP – Most money obligated since ~2010, about \$2.9 million more than last year, and 23 more contracts
 - o 48% last year for HU participants compared to 63% this year
- FY22 ACEP was most funding we've ever had; one big obligation on the Pamunkey River on tribal land
 - o We will publicize more once it closes.
 - o The project received additional Chesapeake Bay funding.
- FY23 CSP funding continues to grow and EQIP remains somewhat constant.
- SWPA – Source Water Protection Areas Subcommittee met 6 times
 - o Considered local working group comments
 - o At 20% – proposed map submitted to National office
 - Once finalized, we will produce a fact sheet to be distributed.

Question by Mark Schonbeck – “How much of the livestock goes toward grazing systems and transition toward grazing systems (away from animals in confinement)?”

- o Funding is together in livestock fund pools.
- o 50% of our funding must go to livestock operations.
- o We have much more, about 70% goes to livestock – probably have the highest percentage in southeast region.
 - We don't have it broken out in the fund pools, but we could pull, if needed, number of contracts that have prescribed grazing
- o AFOs (animal feeding operations) can be head-to-head with grazing operations. Every year we tweaked ranking to make competition as fair as we can
 - We have application screenings to determine high priority (doesn't include poultry)
 - If a planner determines that livestock are in surface water, the application is screened as a high priority.
 - If they determine that runoff from the AFO or barnyard is reaching surface water, those applications are screened as a high priority, as well.
 - We still had \$16-17 million of high priority applications we couldn't fund due to lack of funding.

Question by Rod Walker – “What can we do to make any of this funding readily available to producers who need financial assistance to deal with invasive plants, but who don't need to do other practices?”

- o We don't have a specific fund pool for invasives, but we do have practices to address invasives through multiple fund pools.
- o We can continue to have conversations

Follow up question from Mark – “Does the ranking process prioritize contracts that would entail transition toward grazing (away from confinement)?”

- We don't specifically have any way to promote transitioning away from confinement to 100% grazing.

- Ranking seems to have an equitable playing field and is more heavily weighted to grazing operations; if a farming operation is 100% AFO (animal feeding operation) they typically don't score high enough to get funded. Farmers want a separate AFO fund pool, but we combined them in FY14 or so, so they can be head-to-head.

Urban Ag Activities by Chad Wentz and Patrick Vincent

- We are working with FSA to increase engagement in USDA programs and services
- We are looking to establish a separate urban ag office; currently this is served through Quinton Service Center in New Kent, Virginia.
- Established urban ag subcommittee to focus on these priorities and goals
- FY23 we will be establishing a new urban ag fund pool with more practices
 - Last year we just had a high tunnel fund pool with a few supporting practices like cover crops
 - FY23 fund pool has expanded to most of our typical cropland practices and have adopted several small-scale payment schedules that are designed to help these smaller footprint operations
- \$25,000 grant for Fairfield Middle School's People's Garden
 - Spoke about the grant they received from NRCS and highlight the garden on July 12th with NBC news
- Secured more funding for people's gardens
 - \$35,000 for Richmond Alternative School – Fuchsia Freedom Garden
- \$150k more to fund these projects in FY23 in Richmond
- Opportunity now for everyone to promote community garden or urban farm to register on USDA's website with sign and map listing

Comment by Mark Schonbeck "Might want to add CPS 595 Pest Management Conservation system to urban ag EQIP"

- One practice we consider each year. It's a complex practice that requires an integrative pest management plan.

Comment by Kelly Burke "Mulching?"

- Might not have been a small-scale payment schedule for mulching. We'll look at that.

EWP by Mat Lyons – The full presentation is accurately reflected by the attached slides.

CRP by Tara Bowley

- CRP Grassland ranking factors include criteria and points awarded for multi species cover, predominant of native species, beginning/socially disadvantaged/ veteran farmer, cost, small livestock operations, and state priority zones
- Priority zones just award extra points; it doesn't mean applicants outside of those areas are ineligible.

Question by Travis Mead, “For CRP grassland contracts, who verifies [that] the grazing operators are following the prescribed grazing plans NRCS is putting together for them?”

- o CRP is a partnership between FSA and NRCS. FSA administers program and NRCS provides technical assistance. FSA requires producers to sign acreage report saying that they’re still following their plan and there are spot check procedures to ensure they’re still in compliance. Can get back to you with more details.

Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) updates by Jay Howell and Jenn Allen – The full presentation is accurately reflected by the attached slides.

Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) by James Martin

- BMP accounting
 - o The column in far left “%” is percentage of nutrient reductions that is achieved by that collection of practices.
 - o We still have a long way to go from our 2021 progress to meet our WIIP3 levels of implementation for those practices.
 - o This chart shows where we’ll need more implementation effort.
 - o Practices have a fixed lifespan before they must be re-inspected. Some practices age out before reinspection.
 - Will try to achieve those re-inspections by DEQ permit related inspections
 - This is a change but will hopefully get us back to where we were if not more.
 - o Soil and Water Conservation Plans – We think this is a data reporting anomaly, as well.
 - A lot of eligible work is not being collected and reported in the way that it needs to be.
- Graph shows trends in nitrogen loads over time going back to 2009, the establishment of the Chesapeake Bay TMDL, and through the most recent 2021 annual progress cycle.
 - o The head point to lines on right side of the graph is where we’ll need to be by 2025.
 - o Funding for 2023 and 2024 will help accelerate the levels of implementation, but there is still a lot of work we need to do to get implementation on the ground.
 - Supply chain issues and contractor availability challenges will continue to be a challenge through 2025.

Q&A session

- Sylvia Malm: “Regarding outreach to small farms, and incentive for riparian buffers, is it possible to share the map of priority source water areas, once HQ approves the 2023 update, with the staff implementing these programs - so they are aware of the update and the increased incentive payments for the identified practices implemented in those areas? Livestock exclusion, cover crops, and nutrient management practices would be particularly important.”
 - o Sylvia, yes, we do plan to provide this information to field staff once NHQ approves our 2023 updated map.

- Mark Schonbeck: “I would strongly encourage Virginia NRCS to offer the new Interim Conservation Practice Standard 823 Organic Management in 2023 through EQIP and CSP. Is this a possibility? This new Practice would enhance the conservation benefits of the state's certified and transitioning organic farming operations and would strengthen collaboration between the organic and conservation communities of practice.”
 - We'll continue to consider that. As you may know it's an interim practice standard so it's just out there for testing. Following that testing, headquarters makes the decision to have the practice in our FOTG (field office technical guide) or not. We looked at it for FY23 and decided not to offer it for this year because it does require an organic system plan; we do have a TSP to write those plans. We have an organic fund pool, and we fund all our applicants in that fund pool and CSP. The practices in that interim plan we already offer in Virginia as high priority practices. We'll look at it and see how other states are handling it and consider for the future.

Acronym	Name
ACEP	Agricultural Conservation Easement Program
ALE	Agricultural Land Easement
ASTC	Assistant State Conservationist
BMP	Best Management Practice
BUG	Backyard Urban Garden
CARP	Coronavirus Agricultural Relief Program
CBIP	Chesapeake Bay Incentive Payment
CIC	Conservation Incentives Contract
CIG	Conservation Innovation Grant
CREP	Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program
CRP	Conservation Reserve Program
CSA	Community Supported Agriculture
CSP	Conservation Stewardship Program
CY	Calendar Year
DCR	Department of Conservation and Recreation
DWR	Department of Wildlife Resources
EQIP	Environmental Quality Incentives Program
EWP	Emergency Watershed Program
FOTG	Field Office Technical Guide
FSA	Farm Service Agency
FY	Fiscal Year
GARC	Geographic Area Rate Cap
HU	Historically Underserved
HUC	Hydrologic Unit Code
IRA	Inflation Reduction Act
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NMP	Nutrient Management Plan
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
PIP	Practice Incentive Payment
QRI	Quail Recovery Initiative

RAWA	Recovering American Wildlife Act
RCPP	Regional Conservation Partnership Program
RMP	Resource Management Plan
SCE	State Conservation Engineer
SGCN	Species of Greatest Conservation Need
SIP	Signup Incentive Payment
SRC	State Resource Conservationist
STC	State Conservationist
SWPA	Source Water Protection Area
TA	Technical Assistance
TMDL	Total Maximum Daily Loads
TSP	Technical Service Provider
VCAP	Virginia Conservation Assistance Program
VPA-HIP	Voluntary Public Access & Habitat Incentive Program
WRE	Wetland Reserve Enhancement



United States Department of Agriculture



Virginia State Technical Committee Meeting

October 27, 2022

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Welcome and Opening Remarks

Dr. Edwin Martinez Martinez, State Conservationist



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Ending the Year on a High Note



Supported and addressed all agency priorities for Fiscal Year 2022



Successfully leveraged every Farm Bill tool in the conservation toolbox to provide the resources landowners need to reach their stewardship goals.



Took USDA's Urban Ag and People's Garden initiative to the next level by establishing our flagship garden at Fairfield Middle School and securing funding for a second one in the city of Richmond





Positioning Ourselves for Success in FY23

- Looking ahead to the arrival of replenished funding for our foundational programs and the rollout of numerous new USDA initiatives
- Continuing to collaborate on soil health initiatives with the Virginia Soil Health Coalition and 4theSoil
- Playing a bigger role in developing a profitable, sustainable future for agricultural producers and addressing climate change



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PARTNERSHIPS FOR **CLIMATE-SMART** COMMODITIES



Partnering to Grow Virginia Agriculture

- Supporting 17 new climate-smart commodities projects to expand markets, leverage greenhouse gas benefits and support small and underserved producers
- Looking ahead to the second round of funding announced later this year.



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Financial Assistance Programs Updates

Patrick Vincent, ASTC-Programs



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VA NRCS Spotlight for FY22



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

- EQIP obligations- \$25.4M (483 contracts, 42,300 acres)
- CSP obligations- \$13.5M (190 contracts, 79,327 acres)
- RCPP obligations- \$867K (15 contracts)
- Historically Underserved (HU) participants received 63% of the EQIP funds obligated.
- The top conservation practices planned: fence, brush management, herbaceous weed treatment, access control, heavy use area protection, watering facility, prescribed grazing, livestock pipeline, pasture and hay planting and high tunnel system.
- 2,386 Active EQIP, RCPP, CSP
- Total active funding - \$147 million in funding for conservation benefits to more than a half million acres of VA land.



VA NRCS Spotlight for FY22

Payments and Obligations/Applied Practices

- Since 2012, Virginia NRCS has obligated more than 8,223 conservation contracts resulting in \$305 million in financial assistance, to help farmers implement conservation practices on 1,470,375 acres.
- In FY22, NRCS Field Staff certified 5,538 contract items with financial assistance approved for \$19.8 million.



The chart above reflects payments made (light green) and remaining obligations (dark green) not yet paid.

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VA NRCS Spotlight for FY22

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

- \$5.6 million obligated for 4 ALE's covering 1,692 acres
- 1 ALE closed in Clarke county covering 215 acres
- 7 ACEP-ALE acquisitions in progress
- 2 WRE wetland restorations in progress
- 146 existing recorded easements totaling 17,112 acres of land protected



VA NRCS Spotlight for FY22



Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)

FY2022 CIG State Awardees Virginia Tech & Clifton Institute

- **Virginia Tech**
 - o Project Title: Establishing improved forbs in perennial grassland systems to improve stand diversity, forage quality and soil health.
 - o Purpose: To facilitate increased environmental and forage-livestock production outcomes.
 - o Award Amount: \$195,351
- **Clifton Institute**
 - o Project Title: The Virginia Native Seed Pilot Project
 - o Purpose: To enhance pollinator habitat restoration in Virginia by launching a viable native seed industry.
 - o Award Amount: \$200,000





FY23 NRCS Funding Priorities & Program Updates - EQIP, CSP, ACEP, CIG, SWPA, RCPP



Patrick Vincent, ASTC-Programs

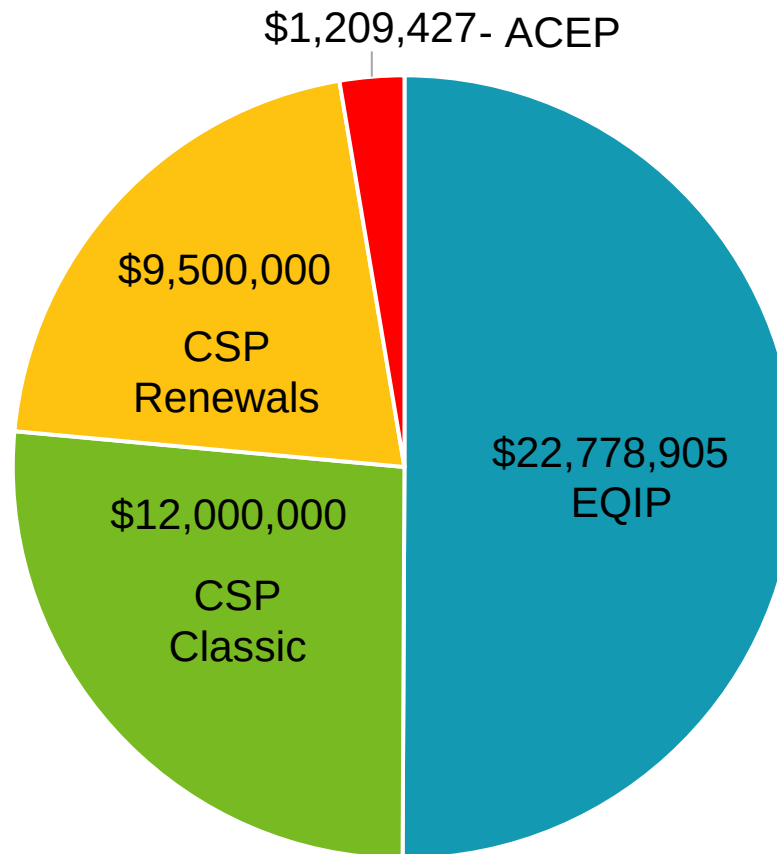


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FY23 NRCS Funding Priorities & Program Updates

EQIP, CSP, ACEP - Program Budget



EQIP funding not yet known for initiatives:

- Longleaf Pine
- Golden Wing Warbler
- Joint Chiefs



FY23 NRCS Funding Priorities & Program Updates

EQIP Statutory Requirements

50% Livestock

10% Wildlife

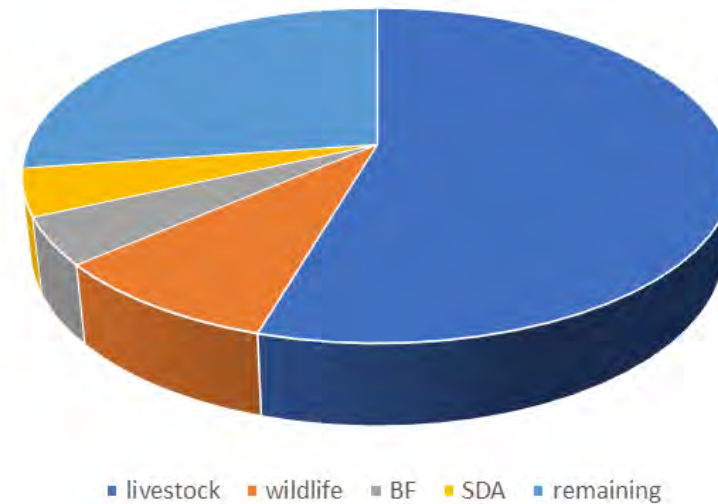
5% Beginning Farmer

5% Socially Disadvantaged

**5% EQIP-Conservation Incentives
Contracts (CIC)**

25% Remaining

- Mandatory offerings
- State priorities



FY23 NRCS Funding Priorities & Program Updates

Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)

- EQIP application deadline – November 4, 2022
- Adding a statewide Urban Agriculture Fund Pool. Eligible Land must be within an Urban Area, as defined by the US Census, OR, an Incorporated Town
- Refined and expanded Source Water Protection Area's (SWPA) from 19% to 20% of Virginia's land area which will provide higher payments to participants for SWPA practices.



Contact Ron Wood, EQIP Program Manager
ron.wood@usda.gov

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FY23 NRCS Funding Priorities & Program Updates

Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)

Coronavirus Agricultural Relief Payment (CARP) Update

- NRCS conducted an economic analysis on practices due concerns were raised about our payment rates and the increasing cost of materials due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Outcome was additional financial assistance will be made available to participants with active or completed EQIP contracts (2013 – 2021) affected by these higher commodity prices for practices completed in calendar year (CY) 2021 or 2022.
- NRCS has identified eight conservation practices whose scenarios have increased in price the most (10% or more).
 - 367 – Roofs and Covers
 - 443 – Irrigation System, Surface and Subsurface
 - 584 – Channel Bed Stabilization
 - 575 – Trails and Walkways
 - 430 – Irrigation Pipeline
 - 468 – Lined Waterway or Outlet
 - 516 – Livestock Pipeline
 - 325 – High Tunnel System (Newly Added)
- Minimum CARP payment of \$300.00 per contract



FY23 NRCS Funding Priorities & Program Updates

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

- \$21.5 million allocated for FY23. The highest allocation we have ever had for Conservation Stewardship Program.
- Field Staff are currently issuing payments for over 900+ contracts; however, participants have the option to delay those payments to CY2023.
- Also, we are processing 134 CSP Renewals applications and those selected for funding will have to be obligated by December 30, 2021.
- The CSP Classic application deadline will be November 4, 2022.



Contact Nizhoni LaFrance-Pettigrew, CSP Program Manager
nizhoni.lafrance@usda.gov

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FY23 NRCS Funding Priorities & Program Updates

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

- **Agricultural Land Easement (ALE) and Wetland Reserve Enhancement (WRE) application deadlines have been set.**
 - Preliminary Application Deadline – November 4, 2022
 - Full Application Package Deadline – January 27, 2023
- **FY23 Funding Allocation**
 - ALE - \$713,267
 - WRE - \$491,000 + \$5,160 for Stewardship
- **Historically Underserved**
 - Historically Underserved (HU) Fund Pool will continue to be offered for ALE



Contact Leticia Jackson-Holder, Realty Specialist- Leticia.Jackson@usda.gov
Diane Dunaway, Easement Program Manager - Diane.Dunaway@usda.gov

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FY23 NRCS Funding Priorities & Program Updates

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

FY23 Geographic Area Rate Cap (GARC) for Wetland Reserve Enhancement (WRE) Compensation

- The maximum cap is \$5,000 per acre on NRCS payment to landowner for WRE.
- VA proposes to pay 95% of the appraised fair market value. Rate has been used since 2011.
- We are proposing a GARC of \$16,000 per acre for 18 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Counties.
- We are proposing a GARC of \$7,100 per acre for the 2 counties surrounding the Great Dismal Swamp. (Suffolk City and Chesapeake City)
- We are also proposing to increase the GARC for counties along the Lower Rappahannock River Watershed. This amount has not been finalized yet.



Questions, concerns, comments? By November 17, 2022
Contact Leticia Jackson-Holder, Leticia.Jackson@usda.gov

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FY23 NRCS Funding Priorities & Program Updates

Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)

- CIG's provide an opportunity for public and private partners to evaluate and accelerate adoption of new approaches to natural resource protection.
- Currently managing 10 CIG's totaling \$1.2 million with various partners.
- CIG partners include Virginia Tech, Sustainable Chesapeake, Virginia State University, Virginia Department of Forestry and Water Science Institute.
- A State CIG will be offered in FY23 with a funding allocation of \$400k for one or more awards. Priorities will be announced at a later date.



Contact Debbie Bullock, State CIG Specialist,
Debbie.bullock@usda.gov

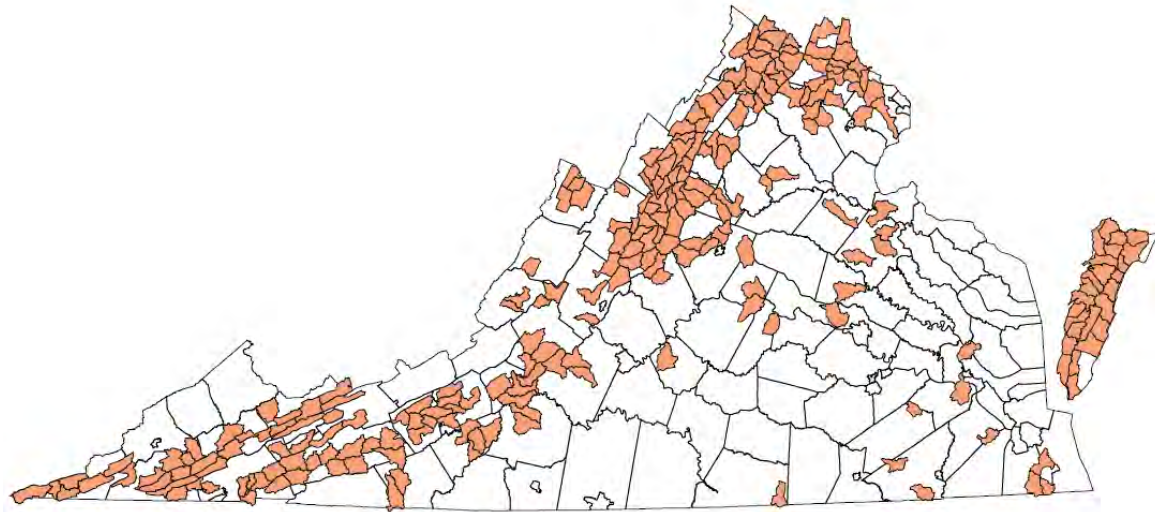
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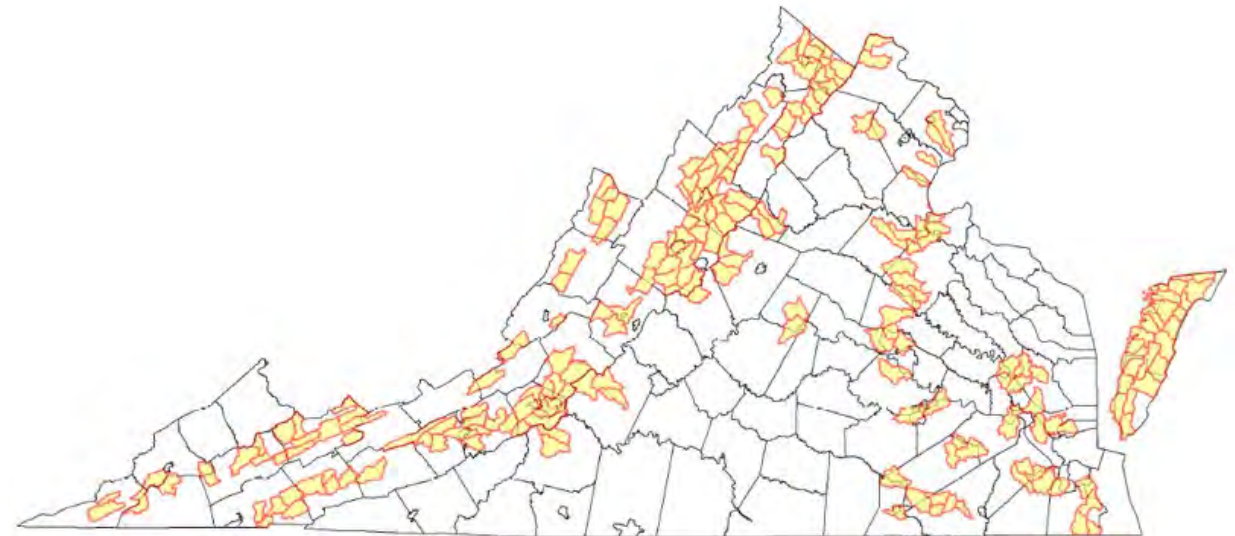
FY23 NRCS Funding Priorities & Program Updates

Virginia Source Water Protection Areas (SWPA)

FY23 Proposed SWPA



Virginia Source Water Protection Areas (FY22)



Contact Stacey Bradshaw, Farm Bill Program Specialist
Stacey.Bradshaw@usda.gov

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FY23 NRCS Funding Priorities & Program Updates

SWPA FY20-FY22 Summary

	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23 (Proposed)
HUCs w/Applied practices	2	28	38	?
Contracts	2	47	53	?
Funding for SWPA Practices	\$43,210.16	\$2,644,579.29	\$2,919,906.42	?
Acres	119	5,073	4,851.50	?
Targeted HUCs	21	106	208	240
% of Land Acres	2%	7%	19%	20%



FY23 NRCS Funding Priorities & Program Updates

FY23 Source Water Protection Practices

- 327 – Conservation Cover
- 328 - Conservation Crop Rotation
- 329 – Residue & Tillage Management, No Till
- 340 - Cover Crop
- 342 - Critical Area Planting
- 351 - Well Decommissioning
- 382 - Fence
- 386 - Field Border
- 390 - Riparian Herb. Cover
- 391 - Riparian Forest Buffer
- 393 - Filter Strip
- 430 - Irrigation Pipeline
- 441 - Irrigation System, Microirrigation
- 472 - Access Control
- 516 - Livestock Pipeline
- 527 - Karst Sinkhole Treatment
- 528 - Prescribed Grazing
- ~~533 - Pumping Plant (not allowed for SWPA)~~
- 554 - Drainage Water Management
- 561 - Heavy Use Area Protection
- 578 - Stream Crossing
- 612 - Tree/Shrub Establishment
- 614 - Watering Facility
- 642 – Water Well

Special
Thanks



Christopher Anderson, EPA
 Calvin Yahn, EPA
 Timothy Mitchell, City of Lynchburg
 Raven Jarvis, VA Dept. Of Health
 Sylvia Malm, Ground Water Protection Council
 Ron Wood, NRCS
 Patrick Vincent, NRCS
 Brent Barriteau, NRCS
 Stacey Bradshaw, NRCS

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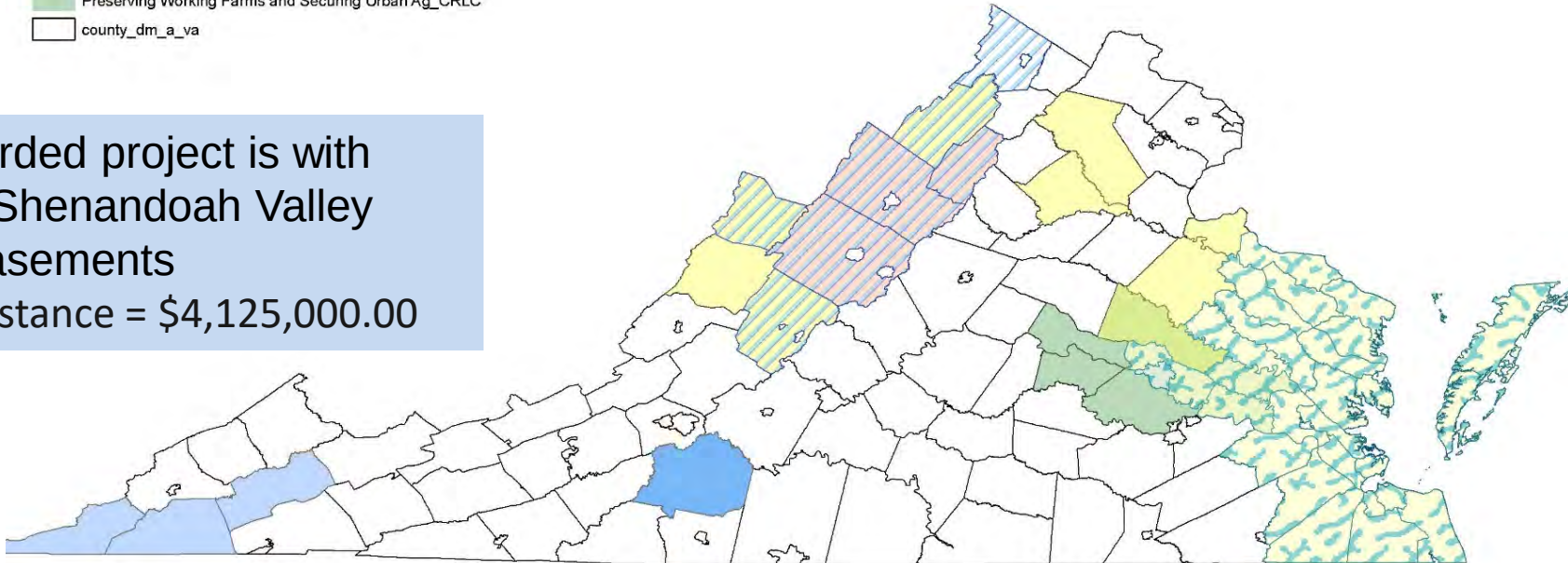


FY23 NRCS Funding Priorities & Program Updates

Regional Conservation Partnership Program - Current/Active Projects

- Qyster_Restoration_VMRC1
- Chesapeake_bay_Farm_Stewardship_Sustainable
- Clinch-Powell_Watershed_The_Nature_Conservancy
- Franklin County Dairy Ag & Water Protection_VCE
- Increasing Landscape Resiliency_Alliance for Shen Valley
- Engaging_Small_AFOs_Sustainable_Chesapeake
- Headwaters Restoration Initiative_TroutUnlimited
- Preserving Working Farms and Securing Urban Ag_CRLC
- county_dm_a_va

Newest awarded project is with
Alliance for Shenandoah Valley
Focus on Easements
Financial Assistance = \$4,125,000.00



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Contact Stacey Bradshaw, Farm Bill Program Specialist/RCPP Coordinator
Stacey.Bradshaw@usda.gov

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Urban Agriculture Activities and People's Garden Update

Patrick Vincent, ASTC-Programs

Chad Wentz, State Resource Conservationist



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Urban Ag Priorities

- Expand conservation tools and support to address the unique needs of urban farmers and communities nationwide.
 - Office of Urban Ag & Innovative Production Cooperative Agreements
 - Urban Ag Office in Richmond
 - Outreach Coordinator Position
 - Urban Ag state technical subcommittee
 - New fund pools for Beginning/Urban Farmers
 - Peoples Garden Initiative



NRCS Urban Agriculture Subcommittee

FY23 EQIP Urban Agriculture Available Practices

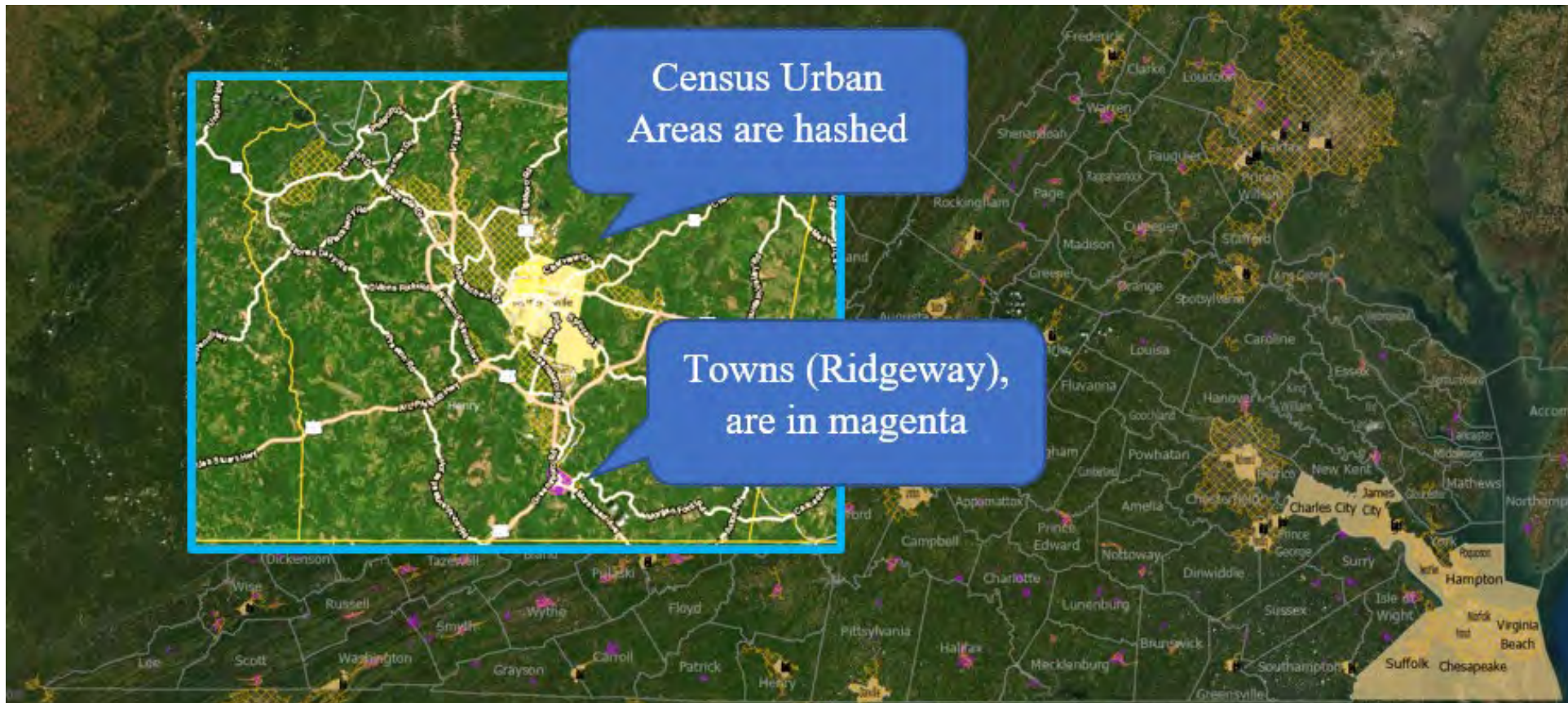
Added our typical
cropland practices

- 317 Composting Facility
- 325 High Tunnel System
- 327 Conservation Cover (Pollinator Habitat)
- 328 Conservation Crop Rotation
- 329 Residue & Tillage Management, No-Till
- 340 Cover Crop
- 342 Critical Area Planting
- 345 Residue & Tillage Management, Reduced Till
- 380 Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment & Renovation
- 386 Field Border
- 391 Riparian Forest Buffer
- 430 Irrigation Pipeline
- 441 Irrigation, Microirrigation
- 449 Irrigation Water Management
- 490 Tree/Shrub Site Preparation
- 558 Roof Runoff Structure
- 590 Nutrient Management
- 612 Tree/Shrub Establishment



NRCS Urban Agriculture Subcommittee

- FY23 Urban Agriculture EQIP Fund Pool
- Statewide competition for cropland that is within an urban area and/or town as defined by the 2021 Ag Census – Urban and Rural Classification and Urban Criteria



People's Garden Initiative

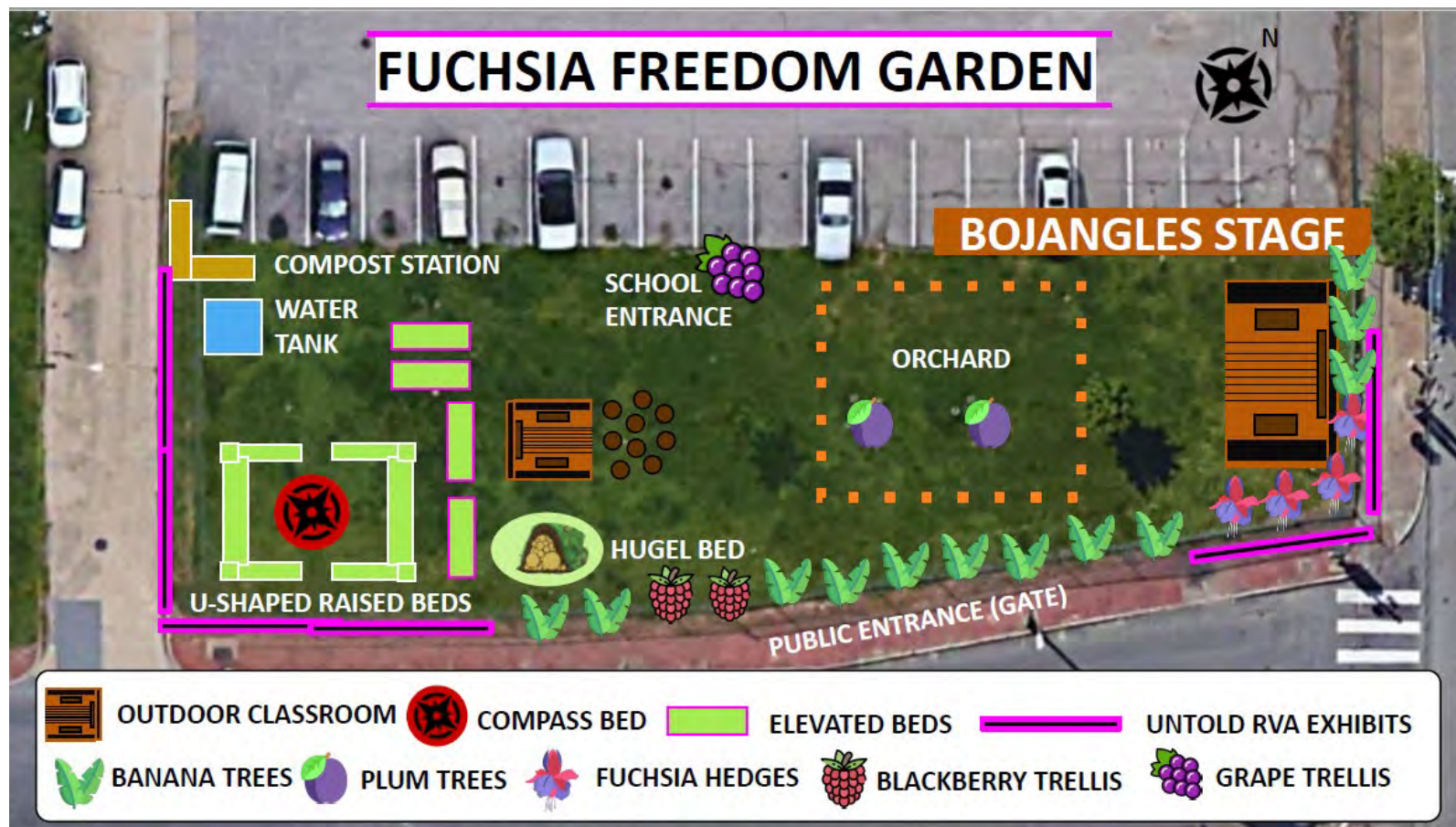
Fairfield Middle School

- **Cornerstone Farm Community Garden**
- Established in 2012 and now encompasses **3-5 acres**
- Partnering with the **Community Food Collaborative** via MOU
- Supports a **Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)** Program
- Integrated into the **school curriculum through the Backyard Urban Gardens (BUG)** program
- Approved for a **full-time Community Agriculturist** position



People's Garden Initiative

Richmond Alternative School



This proposed garden in historic Jackson Ward would also feature a visual exhibition with a historical narrative to commemorate the rich legacy of African-American heritage of this community.

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People's Garden Initiative



Join Us!



Do you have a community farm or garden that you'd like to designate a People's Garden? Join us!

[Register as a People's Garden](https://www.usda.gov/peoples-garden)

<https://www.usda.gov/peoples-garden>

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Urban Agriculture and Innovation Production Virginia Grants Announcement



- **Partner:** Cultivate Charlottesville
Project Title: The Power to Grow: Cultivating New Opportunities in Urban Agriculture and Food Equity in Charlottesville
Summary: Power to Grow, through Cultivate Charlottesville, will bring the community together to plan for the next steps in replacing, restoring and protecting community urban agricultural land and infrastructure while also expanding development of supportive programming and systems.
Type: Planning
- **Partner:** Arcadia Food
Project Title: Route 1 Community Farm: Making Farmland Accessible to a Food-Insecure Population
Summary: The Arcadia Center for Sustainable Food & Agriculture will establish the Route 1 Community Farm, a two-acre growing space nestled within Arcadia's working farm that will provide resources for residents to cultivate their own culturally appropriate foods. Educational resources and marketing opportunities will also be provided to community farmers.
Type: Implementation
- **Partner:** INMED Partnerships for Children, Inc.
Project Title: INMED Aquaponics
Summary: INMED aims to expand programming for the Leesburg Mobile Home Park (LMHP) by establishing the Esperanza (Hope) Center and community aquaponics garden. This project leverages INMED's existing partnerships, community networks and long history of successful education programs to address food insecurity, health inequities and lack of sustainable incomes.
Type: Implementation





United States Department of Agriculture

Watershed Programs and Rehabilitation Buchanan County EWP Update

Mat Lyons, State Conservation Engineer



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Town of Hurley (Buchanan County) EWP



- Received notification of EWP funding approval for the approved sites on January 12, 2022 and initiated weekly coordination with FEMA.
- The EWP agreement was finalized on March 15, 2022.
- Buchanan County is currently working through the design, permitting and scheduling for the approved sites.





United States Department of Agriculture

Watershed Dam Rehabilitation Update

Mat Lyons, State Conservation Engineer



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Beaver Creek 1 Dam Rehab Plan

- **Sponsor:** Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority
- **Consultant:** Schnabel Engineering
- **Funding:** \$341K (original cooperative agreement) + \$199K via Amendment 1
- **Agreement Date:** July 31, 2020 (expires December 31, 2022)
- **Status:** Draft environmental assessment under revision to address NRCS National Water Management Center comments. Final assessment should be completed by late fall 2022



Cherrystone Creek 1 and Cherrystone Creek 2A

Watershed Plan Supplement/Environmental Assessments completed

Cherrystone Creek 1 - September 2019

Cherrystone Creek 2A - August 2019

Sponsor: Pittsylvania County

Consultant: Schnabel Engineering

Design funding

Cherrystone Creek 1 - FY22 Watershed Rehabilitation Program funding

- \$790,000 for the cost of the design and local project administration costs
- Cooperative agreement signed 3/30/22
- Final design due 4/30/24

Cherrystone Creek 2A - IIJA funding

- \$790,000 for the cost of the design and local project administration costs
- Cooperative agreement in process



Johns Creek 1 Dam Rehab Design

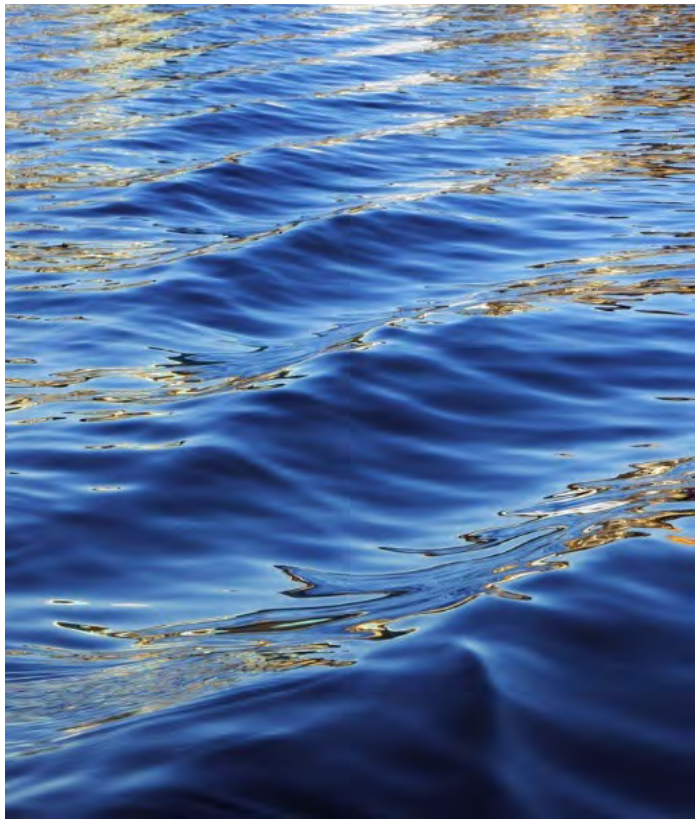
Watershed Plan Supplement/Environmental Assessment
completed August 2019

- **Sponsor:** Mountain Castles SWCD
- **Consultant:** DCR will assist/TBD
- **Funding:** requested \$865,000 for the cost of the design and local project administration costs
- **Status:** Fund request has been submitted.





FSA Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Updates



Fiscal Year 2022 Chesapeake Bay CREP Enrollment and Payment Data in Virginia

Acres under contract as of 9/30/2022	9,954.7 acres
Total Acres Enrolled during FY2022	462.4 acres
NEW Acres Enrolled during FY2022	33.7 acres
RE-ENROLLED Acres Enrolled During FY2022	428.7 acres
Annual Rental Payments	\$819,521
PIP Payments	\$52,739
SIP Payments	\$2,700
CBIP	\$108,554
Cost Share Payments	\$58,019

Fiscal Year 2022 Southern Rivers CREP Enrollment and Payment Data in Virginia

Acres under contract as of 9/30/2022	6,640.9 acres
Total Acres Enrolled during FY2022	344.9 acres
NEW Acres Enrolled during FY2022	116.0 acres
RE-ENROLLED Acres Enrolled During FY2022	228.9 acres
Annual Rental Payments	\$499,077
PIP Payments	\$536,171
SIP Payments	\$9,800
Cost Share Payments	\$358,382



GRASSLAND Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Grasslands Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is a voluntary program that contracts with agricultural producers to help landowners and operators protect grassland, including rangeland, pastureland, and certain other lands, while maintaining the areas as grazing lands. The grasslands CRP program is a working lands program that emphasizes support for grazing operations under the greatest threat of conversion.

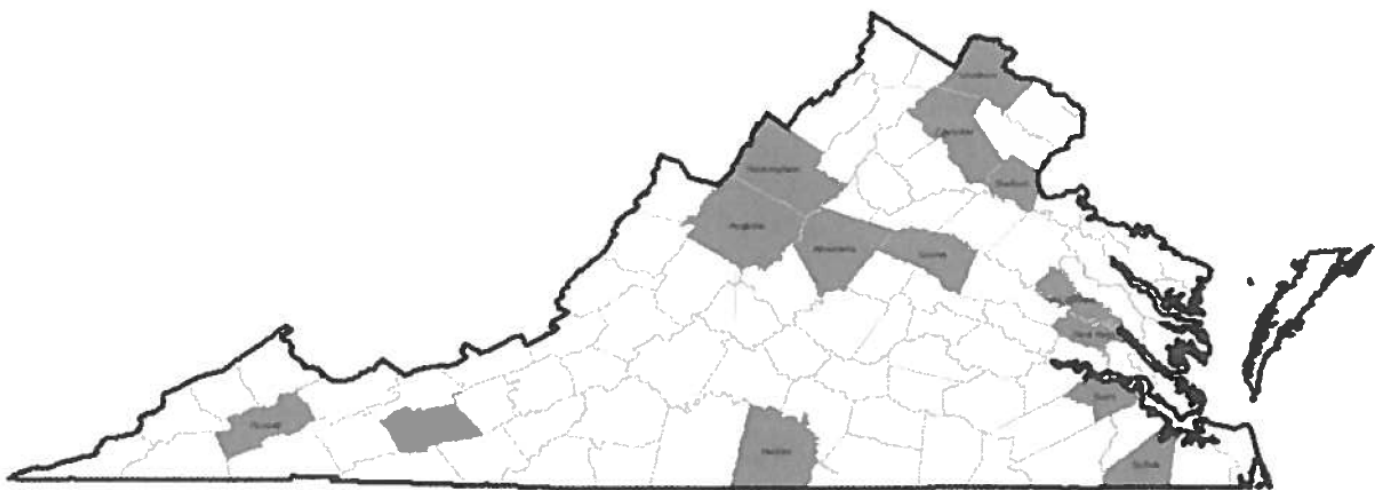


GRASSLAND Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

In late August, directive was given for establishing a State Grassland CRP Priority Zone. The Grassland Zone was limited to no more than 25 percent of the total acres of hay, pasture, and rangeland within the State. Guidance included considering the following criteria:

- grazing lands subject to woody encroachment
- grazing lands of special significance
- tribal lands
- historically underserved communities
- areas where wildlife can be protected or enhanced
- proximity to protected public grassland or native prairie preserves.

GRASSLAND Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)



Virginia State Grassland Priority Zone	
County	Hay, Pasture, and Rangeland Acreage
Albemarle	101,846
Augusta	175,804
Loudoun	118,836
New Kent	8,995
Fauquier	143,151
Halifax	105,229
Rockingham	132,928
Russell	85,250
Stafford	15,943
Suffolk City	105,778
Wythe	11,408
King William	11,408
Louisa	61,119
Surry	10,381

DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES 2022 UPDATE

NRCS STATE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Jay Howell
Small Game Project Co-Leader
Wildlife Division



CONSERVE. CONNECT. PROTECT.

Jenn Allen
Assistant Chief
Wildlife Division

Topics

- **Private Lands Program**
- **Voluntary Public Access & Habitat Incentive Program**
- **State Wildlife Action Plan**
- **Funding Updates**



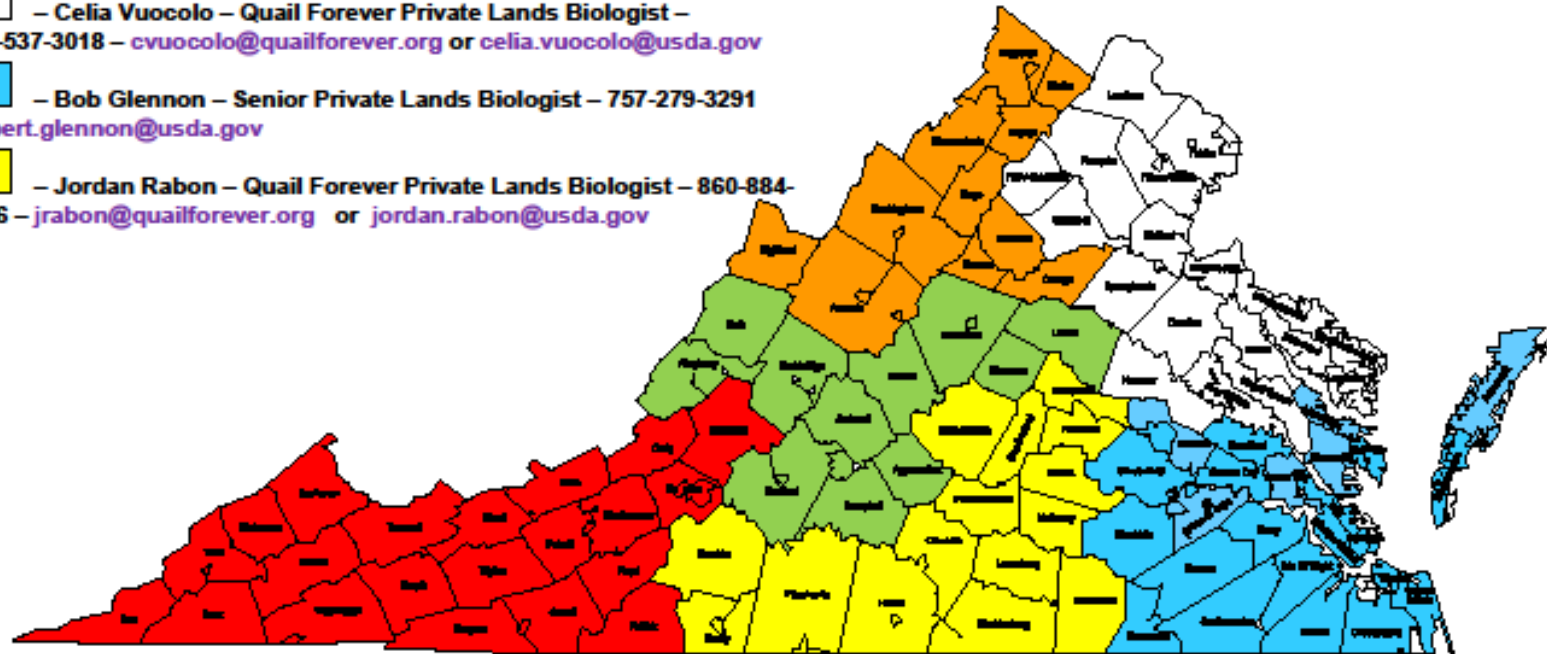


Private Lands Program

- 13 Years of Quail Recovery Initiative implementation
- 6 Biologists providing conservation delivery
 - 2 In partnership with Quail Forever
 - 3 Through CMI and Virginia Tech
 - 1 NRCS Area Natural Resource Specialist
- 5,760 Total site visits made (420 last year)
- 3,196 Management plans written (176 last year)
- 56,4723 Acres of land impacted

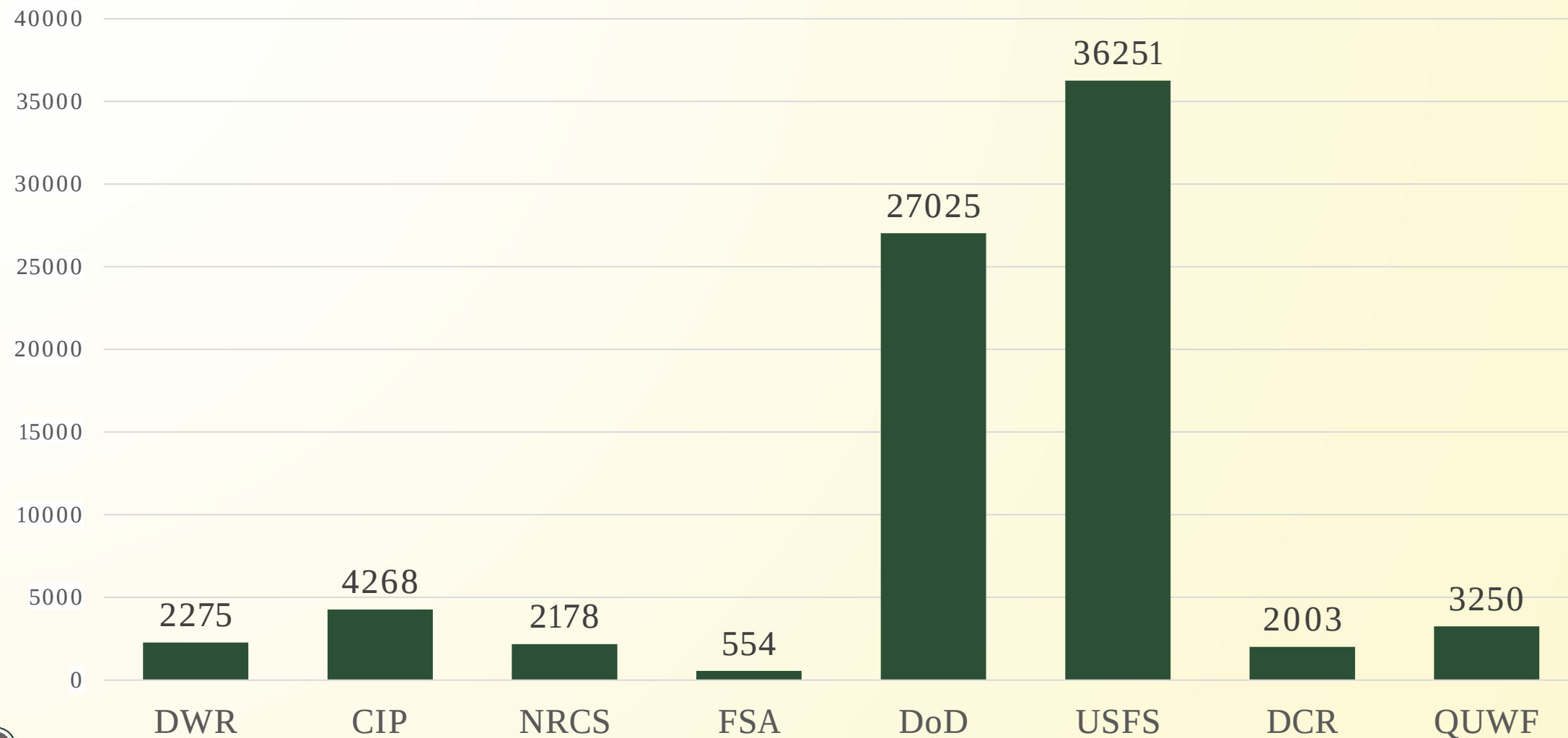


- Andy Rosenberger – Senior Private Lands Biologist 540-585-3627 – Andrew.Rosenberger@usda.gov
- Tiffany Beachy – Private Lands Biologist – 540-569-4664 – Tiffany.beachy@usda.gov
- Elizabeth Elliott – NRCS Area I Natural Resource Specialist – 540-569-4662 – Elizabeth.elliott@usda.gov
- Celia Vuocolo – Quail Forever Private Lands Biologist – 804-537-3018 – cvuocolo@quailforever.org or celia.vuocolo@usda.gov
- Bob Glennon – Senior Private Lands Biologist – 757-279-3291 Robert.glennon@usda.gov
- Jordan Rabon – Quail Forever Private Lands Biologist – 860-884-6676 – jrabon@quailforever.org or jordan.rabon@usda.gov



Private Lands Wildlife Team – Coverage Area Map

Reported Early Successional Habitat Management in Virginia 2021



Voluntary Public Access & Habitat Incentive Program

~\$3M from Farm Bill VPA-HIP to provide access, habitat work and infrastructure in the Coalfields region of Southwest Virginia

- **26 management agreements with private landowners**

- **Deliverables to date:**

- **>23,000 acres enrolled**
- **13 elk viewing properties**
- **12 elk hunting properties**
- **Up to 24 birding trail sites to choose from**
- **5 paddlecraft sites**
- **350 acres of habitat managed and counting**



State Wildlife Action Plan 2025

Must be renewed every 10 years

- **Due in 2025**
- **883 Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN); List will be updated**
- **Species prioritized by (1) Imperilment & (2) Management Opportunity**

Key Changes for 2025 Plan

- **Plants SGCN list**
- **Marine wildlife species (e.g., marine mammals)**
- **Stakeholder engagement with Tribal Nations**



State Wildlife Action Plan 2025: Timeline



- Update SGCN List: June 2023
- Habitats & Threats: Sept 2023
- Conservation Actions, Research & Monitoring Needs: Feb 2024
- Public Outreach: Sept 2024 to Mar 2025
- Administrative Review: June 2025
- Submission to USFWS: Sept 2025



Funding

DWR's budget continues to tighten, though conservation needs continue to increase

- **Pittman-Robertson Act federal funds have increased**
 - Virginia's 5-year annual apportionment average: \$13.6M
 - Virginia's FY22 apportionment: \$19.5M
 - FY23 potential apportionment is projected to be similar to FY22
 - Challenge to ID non-federal match levels necessary to fully spend these increased funds
- **Trying to get creative**
 - Partnerships are always needed



Funding - RAWA

Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA)

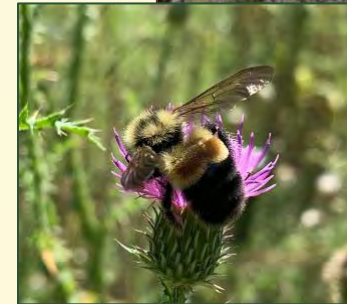
- **Wildlife conservation, education, and recreation**
 - 15% funds must be spent on listed species
 - Up to 15% funds on education and recreation
- **Nationally: \$1.3B annually to states; \$97.5M annually to Tribal Nations**
- **Virginia: \$21M annually; 25% match required**
- **Status as of last week:**
 - Potential: “Cautiously optimistic to optimistic”
 - HR2773 passed; Senate2372 proposed - passed Environmental and Public Works Committee; focused on identifying funding sources



Funding - RAWA

Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA)

- **Potential benefits for Virginia - examples:**
 - Fund 5 Private Lands Biologists to target SGCN habitat on private lands
 - Expand DWR's stream restoration team to 5 specialists
 - Expand the Virginia Pollinator Smart Program
 - Climate resilience actions (marsh restoration; living shoreline; DWR full-time staff position; etc.)
 - Accelerate priority land acquisitions
 - Establish a grant program for local governments and non-profits to partner on habitat projects
 - Fully implement the Virginia Wildlife Viewing Plan
 - Expand access and education for wildlife viewing in urban communities
 - And many more...



Questions

Jenn Allen

jenn.allen@dwr.virginia.gov

804-516-6010



STAY IN TOUCH WITH US

LOCATION

DWR HQ
7870 Villa Park Drive
Henrico, VA

CONTACT US

<https://dwr.virginia.gov/contact/>
Phone: (804) 367-1000

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Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation

James Martin, Division of Soil and Water
Conservation Director



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FY23 Brings Historic Funding!



VACS BMPs and TA	\$256,500,000
Small Herd Initiative	\$7,000,000
Conservation Reserve Enhancement Project (CREP)	\$6,000,000
RMPs, litter transport, NMPs	\$4,560,000
Incentive for Riparian Buffer Maintenance for Ag Producers	\$2,000,000
Small Farm Outreach Program (DCR & VSU)	\$250,000
SWCD Administration and Operations Funding Increase	\$3,600,000
District Dam Rehabilitation	\$45,500,000
Development & maintenance of Conservation Suite Application (DCR)	\$1,500,000
Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP)	\$4,000,000


 PY23 VACS allocated \$123,000,000 for Technical Assistance and BMPs
 PY24 VACS anticipated to be \$133,500,000 for Technical Assistance and BMPs



Agricultural BMP Accounting

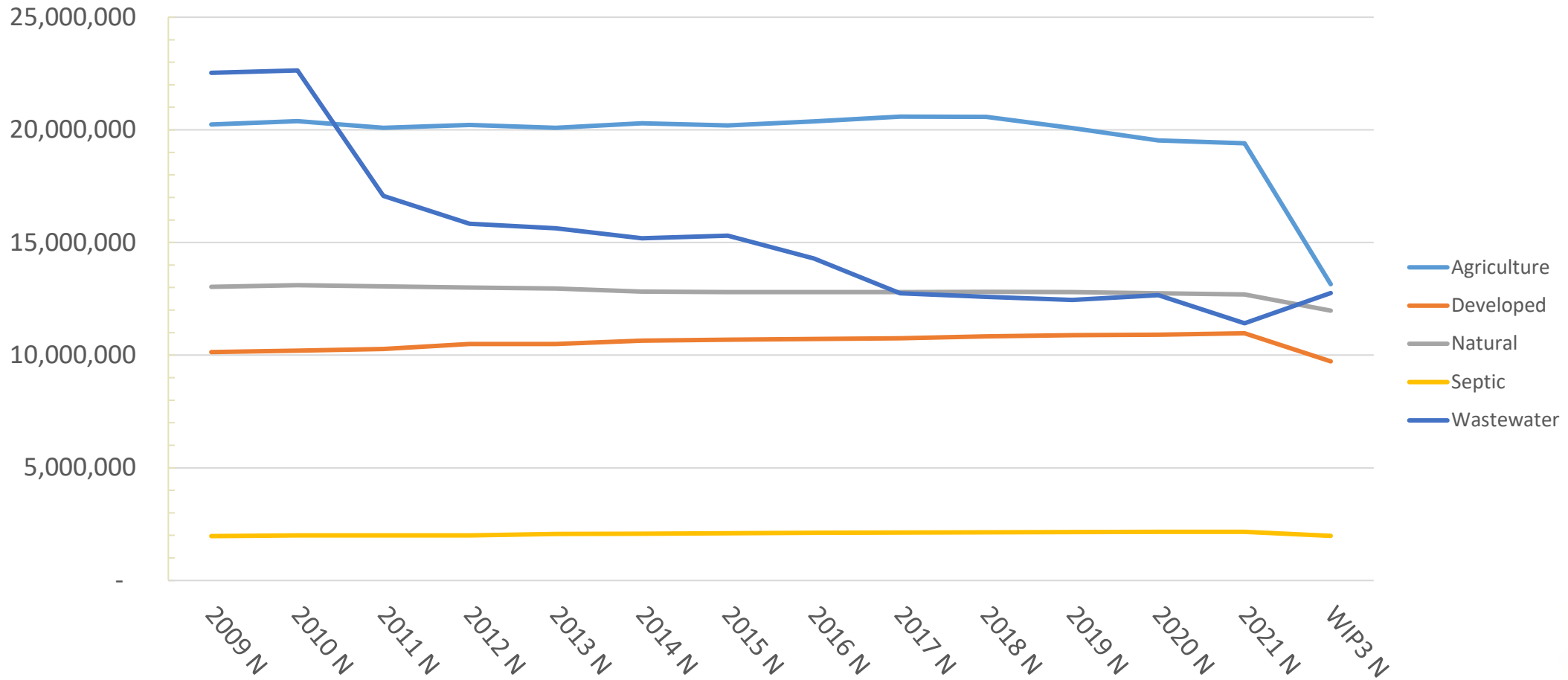
%	Agriculture Practices	Unit	2009 Progress	2017 Progress	2021 Progress	WIP 3 Official
20	Cover Crop	Acres	77,290	135,187	153,488	384,396
	Cover Crop with Fall Nutrients	Acres	-	62	1,518	20,038
	Commodity Cover Crop	Acres	24,398	21,088	29,070	39,124
15	Nutrient Application Management Core Nitrogen	Acres	543,549	599,920	584,909	951,395
	Nutrient Application Management Rate Nitrogen	Acres	-	-	207,951	758,474
	Nutrient Application Management Placement Nitrogen	Acres	-	-	122,079	426,452
	Nutrient Application Management Timing Nitrogen	Acres	-	-	141,048	427,076
	Nutrient Application Management Core Phosphorus	Acres	-	599,920	584,851	951,395
	Nutrient Application Management Rate Phosphorus	Acres	-	-	74,289	426,452
	Nutrient Application Management Placement Phosphorus	Acres	-	-	107,726	426,452
	Nutrient Application Management Timing Phosphorus	Acres	-	-	-	426,376
13	Poultry Waste Management Systems	Animal Units	1,409,530	1,089,525	440,510	1,931,198
	Livestock Waste Management Systems	Animal Units	39,294	37,813	40,493	297,702
12	Forest Buffers on Fenced Pasture Corridor	Acres in Buffer	-	-	171	26,390
	Grass Buffers on Fenced Pasture Corridor	Acres in Buffer	5,262	8,857	17,147	45,766
8	Conservation Tillage	Acres	509,783	598,274	155,062	402,990
	High Residue Tillage	Acres	64,113	76,663	479,846	185,201
	Low Residue Tillage	Acres	80,025	-	-	19,853
8	Soil and Water Conservation Plan	Acres	-	-	7,250	1,183,460
5	Forest Buffers	Acres in Buffer	12,248	5,443	3,592	21,965
3	Land Retirement	Acres	29,954	30,641	23,975	61,271
2	Grass Buffers	Acres in Buffer	2,542	5,668	5,303	24,058
2	Prescribed Grazing	Acres	84,328	206,709	252,871	347,363
2	Tree Planting	Acres	4,089	14,487	6,575	34,256
2	Manure Transport Out Of Area	Dry Tons	32,005	5,036	16,322	87,826

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Bay Nitrogen Loads Over Time (CAST19)





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Question and Answer

???



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Closing Remarks

Dr. Edwin Martinez Martinez, State Conservationist



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