



Natural Resources Conservation Service  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



**Texas NRCS Programs Update for State Technical Committee** FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION  
September 2023 FSA | NRCS | RMA | Business Center

# Payments Made during FY 2023

- Texas has over 10,000 active Financial Assistance contracts with Farmers, Ranchers, and Forest stewards.
- \$98.5 million in payments



# New FY 2023 RCPP Agreements

- Prairie Grasslands Conservation in Central Texas (GRIP)
  - Land Management
- Nueces Watershed Additive Conservation Partnership
  - Entity Held Easements
- Camp Bullis Sentinel Landscape
  - Land Management
  - Entity Held Easements
- Drought Resilience Incentive Program (DRIP)
  - Land Management





# FY 2023 Financial Assistance & Easements

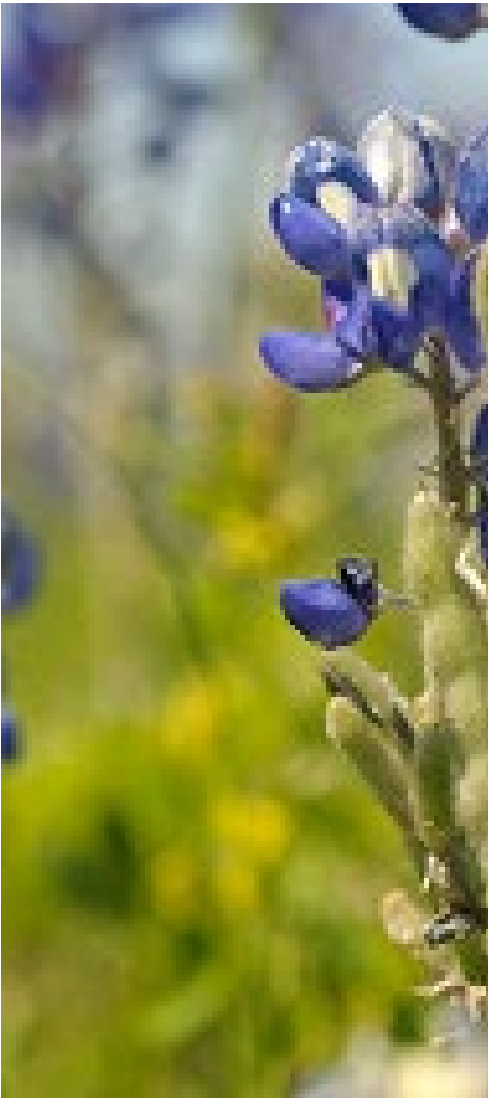
| Program                    | Dollars         | Contracts or Agreements | Acres     |
|----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|-----------|
| EQIP                       | \$122.9 million | 2482                    | 1,808,938 |
| CSP                        | \$14.6 million  | 120                     | 522,551   |
| CSP-GCI                    | \$1.5 million   | 193                     | 18,766    |
| State CIG                  | \$1.0 million   | 5                       | NA        |
| WRE/WREP                   | \$13.9 million  | 12                      | 4453      |
| ALE                        | \$5.0 million   | 6                       | 6025      |
| RCPP-Entity Held Easements | \$3.5 million   | 4                       | 14,466    |
|                            |                 |                         |           |
|                            |                 |                         |           |
|                            |                 |                         |           |

# FY 2023 IRA Funds

| Program | Dollars        | Contracts or Agreements | Acres   |
|---------|----------------|-------------------------|---------|
| EQIP    | \$12.4 million | 87                      | 126,932 |
| CSP     | \$5.0 million  | 35                      | 150,606 |
| ALE     | \$25.4 million | 17                      | 13,846  |

# EQIP Fund Pools for FY 2024?

| AFO/CAFO                                     | Beginning Farmer/Rancher | High Tunnel             | WaterSmart                      |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Shortleaf Pine                               | SDA Farmer/Rancher       | Source Water Protection | StrikeForce Initiative          |
| Sustainable Forestry & African American Land | University Lands         | Urban Initiative        | Wildlife                        |
| Lesser Prairie Chicken Initiative            | Monarch Butterfly        | NWQI                    | Conservation Incentive Contract |
| Migratory Bird Resurgence                    | National Air Quality     | Organic                 | On-Farm Energy                  |
| Local Fund Pools                             | CPA, DIA, CEMA           | IRA-Climate Smart       |                                 |



# Source Water Protection Practices for FY 2024?

| Brush Management       | Herbaceous Weed Treatment | Conservation Cover      | Conservation Crop Rotation |
|------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| No Till                | Contour Buffer Strips     | Prescribed Burning      | Cover Crop                 |
| Critical Area Planting | Reduced Till              | Sediment Basin          | Well Decommissioning       |
| Pond                   | Fence                     | Woody Residue Treatment | Field Border               |
| Riparian Herb. Cover   | Riparian Forest Buffer    | Filter Strip            | Stream Habitat Improvement |
| Grade Stabilization    | Grassed Waterway          | Irrigation Reservoir    | Microirrigation            |



# Source Water Protection Practices for FY 2024?

| Sprinkler System                    | Irrigation- Surface and Subsurface       | Irrigation Water Management    | Access Control                 |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Forage Harvest Management           | Pasture and Hay Planting                 | Livestock Pipeline             | Prescribed Grazing             |
| Pumping Plant                       | Grazing Land Mechanical Treat.           | Range Planting                 | Stream Crossing                |
| Streambank and Shoreline Protection | Channel Bed Stabilization                | Strip Cropping                 | Structure for Water Control    |
| Nutrient Management                 | Pest Management                          | Terrace                        | Vegetative Barrier             |
| Salinity and Sodic Soil Mgmt.       | Tree/Shrub Establishment                 | Watering Facility              | Water and Sediment Ctrl. Basin |
| Water Well                          | Restoration of Rare or Declining Habitat | Wetland Wildlife Habitat Mgmt. | Upland Wildlife Habitat Mgmt.  |
| Wetland Restoration                 | Wetland Creation                         | Wetland Enhancement            |                                |





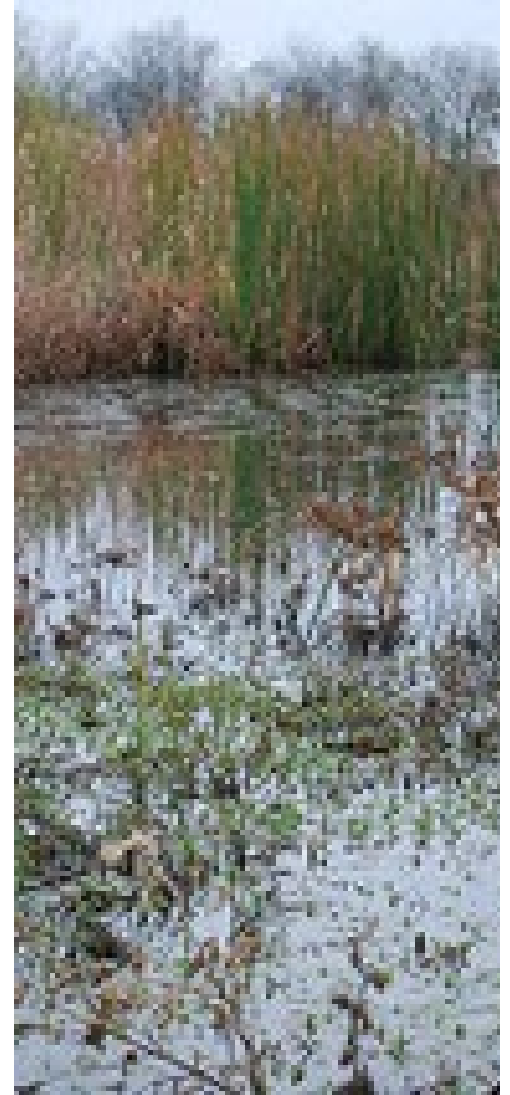
# Priority Practices for FY 2024?

| No Till          | Cover Crop                | Well Decommissioning | Riparian Forest Buffer |
|------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| Grassed Waterway | Wildlife Habitat Planting | Mulching             | Nutrient Management    |
| Terrace          | Upland Wildlife Habitat   |                      |                        |
|                  |                           |                      |                        |
|                  |                           |                      |                        |
|                  |                           |                      |                        |



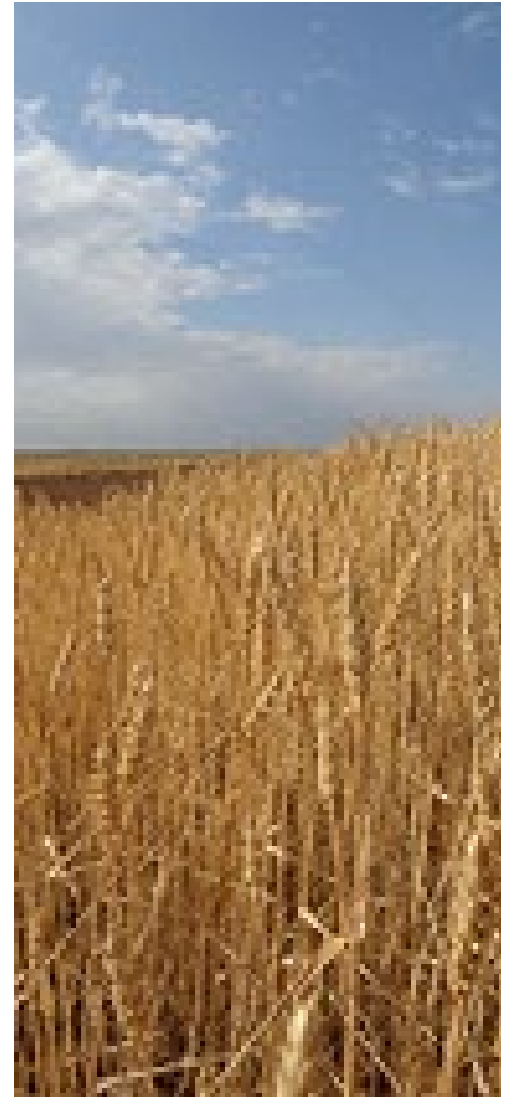
# FY 2024 WRE GARC

- Texas NRCS set the FY 2024 Geographic Area Rate Cap (GARC) at \$5000 per acre
- Appraisal Required
  - Payment for Fair Market Agriculture Value but not to exceed GARC



# FY 2024 Proposed Sign up Deadlines

- EQIP: November 3, 2023
  - To include IRA funding
- CSP: January 26, 2024
  - To include IRA funding
- ACEP: December 8, 2023
  - ALE (General and GSS), WRE, WREP
- RCPP: to be determined by Lead Partners





# Questions?

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Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;  
fax: (202) 690-7442; or  
email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

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United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

# Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

## General CRP Signup 60

- More than 190,000 acres accepted in Texas

## Grasslands CRP Signup 205

- More than 144,000 acres accepted in Texas

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United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

# Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

## Active Enrollment (July 2023)

### CRP General

- Contracts: 9,821
- Farms: 7,526
- Acres: 1,528,135
- Annual Rent: \$53 million\*

### CRP Grasslands

- Contracts: 975
- Farms: 724
- Acres: 317,620
- Annual Rent: \$5.4 million\*

### CRP Continuous

- Contracts: 2,940
- Farms: 1,995
- Acres: 312,936
- Annual Rent: \$13 million\*

### SAFE

- Acres: 211,995  
(CP38E Grass)

\*estimated

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# Inflation Reduction Act

## Assistance for Distressed Borrowers (Section 22006)

- **Cash Flow-Based Assistance**
  - For FSA direct loan borrowers who did not have sufficient cash flow to make their scheduled loan payment between Aug. 1, 2022 - Jan. 15, 2024.
- **Extraordinary Measure Assistance**
  - For FSA direct loan borrowers who took extraordinary measures to keep their loan accounts current between Feb. 28, 2020 – Oct. 18, 2022.

Request assistance at [farmers.gov](https://farmers.gov) or  
in-person at local FSA office.





# Inflation Reduction Act

## Increasing Land, Capital, and Market Access Program (Section 22007)

- This program will fund cooperative agreements or grants for project in one of the areas of concern:
  - Capital access or markets access concerns that affect ability to access land; or
  - A combination of one or more of land, capital, and market access concerns.
- Center for Heirs Property Preservation, H.O.P.E. for Small Farm Sustainability, Kansas Black Farmers Association, Inc.



# Inflation Reduction Act

## Discrimination Financial Assistance Program (Section 22007)

- Deadline to apply extended to Jan. 13, 2024.
- Deadline to request records from FSA extended to Nov. 3, 2023.
- Analytic Acquisitions, Regional Hub
- [22007apply.gov](https://22007apply.gov)



# Urban Agriculture

## Urban County Committees

Albuquerque, NM

Atlanta, GA

Chicago, IL

Cleveland, OH

Dallas, TX

Detroit, MI

Grand Rapids, MI

Los Angeles, CA

Oakland, CA

Minneapolis-St. Paul,  
MN

New Orleans, LA

New York, NY

Philadelphia, PA

Phoenix, AZ

Portland, OR

Richmond, VA

St. Louis, MO

## 2023 Selected Locations

Boston, MA

Columbia, SC

Denver, CO

Houston, TX

Jackson, MS

Kansas City, MO

Las Vegas, NV

Little Rock, AR

Memphis, TN

Pittsburg, PA



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# Stay in Touch



Producers can signup at [farmers.gov/subscribe](https://farmers.gov/subscribe) for email communications.

Producers can text STCountyName to FSANOW (372-669) for text alerts.

- TXBrazos, TXFortBend

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United States Department of Agriculture

# Water Resources Sub-Committee Report

Kyle Wright  
USDA-NRCS Texas  
State Water Quality Specialist



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# National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI) FY24



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- **The STAC Water Resources sub-committee met on July 12<sup>th</sup> to discuss recommendations for the FY24 NWQI program.**
- **It was recommended that the program continue as is with no changes.**
- **The program was discussed, and the committee agreed to recommend no changes.**
- **The Texas NRCS FY24 NWQI proposal, with no changes, was submitted to National Headquarters on July 20<sup>th</sup>.**



# Source Water Protection Areas (SWPA) FY24



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- **The STAC Water Resources sub-committee met on August 10<sup>th</sup> to discuss recommendations for the FY24 SWPA program.**
- **It was recommended that the program continue as is with no changes.**
- **The program was discussed, and the committee agreed to recommend no changes.**
- **The Texas NRCS FY24 NWQI proposal, with no changes, was submitted to National Headquarters on August 17<sup>th</sup>.**





- **The STAC Water Resources sub-committee met on September 22<sup>nd</sup> to get an update on the FY24 NWQI & SWPA initiatives and discuss additional items for the full STAC meeting.**
- **Aaron Hoff, Tarrant Regional Water District, discussed the effects of commercial solar farms and their impact on Water Quality and other resource concerns.**
- **Aaron agreed to give a brief presentation to the full STAC meeting.**





# Costs and Benefits of Solar Development



- ▶ Pros
  - ▶ Long term income source for farmers and ranchers
  - ▶ Temporary influx of jobs
  - ▶ Kickbacks such as community improvement projects
  - ▶ Prevents more intensive forms of development







# Costs and Benefits of Solar Development



## ► Cons

- Runoff and erosion concerns during construction and post-construction
- Use of chemical vegetation management methods necessary in some areas
- Potential for permanent loss of quality habitat, range, or farmland















## Ideal Best Management Practices

- ▶ Work with solar developers and our local partners to create suggested BMPs that better account for local concerns
  - ▶ Minimize grading
  - ▶ Don't remove existing vegetation
  - ▶ Double seeding/pre-seeding
  - ▶ Utilize native grass mixes
  - ▶ Co-locate agricultural activities



# Questions?



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# **Fish and Wildlife Subcommittee Update**

**Cyndee Watson  
NRCS STAC Fish and Wildlife  
Subcommittee Chair**

**State Coordinator for Texas  
Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program  
[cyndee\\_watson@fws.gov](mailto:cyndee_watson@fws.gov)**

# Fish and Wildlife Subcommittee

- Role – we serve in an advisory capacity to provide information regarding pressing wildlife concerns in Texas to the State Conservationist for her consideration
- The subcommittee met via Microsoft teams on July 25, 2023. In total, 29 people called into the meeting. Our main topic of discussion was the new 10% EQIP fund pool.

# Subcommittee Discussion

- During our meeting, concerns were brought up that some practices were being included in that pool that were not beneficial to wildlife. As a group, we discussed several practices that we recommend be included and have submitted that list to NRCS.
- After that meeting, we sent a poll to subcommittee members to see if we needed to meet again before the STAC – consensus was that we did not need to meet again.



# F&W Subcommittee

- During the Spring STAC, we formally requested that several scenarios be adopted by TX NRCS for watershed restoration under 643 Restoration of Rare or Declining Natural Communities and 410 Grade Stabilization Structure, Zuni bowls.
- We are grateful that NRCS has accepted this request by adopting the scenarios under 643 and we understand they are working with engineers on an existing practice for zuni bowls.
- We also requested to collaborate on training with NRCS and are grateful that several partners now have funds to conduct these trainings.





# Formal Request

- We respectfully and formally request that an internal communication strategy be developed on which conservation practices are eligible under the 10% EQIP Wildlife Fund Pool.

# Thanks on behalf of the Fish and Wildlife Subcommittee

