



United States
Department of
Agriculture



NRCS Florida
State Technical Committee Meeting
June 12, 2024

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Welcome and Opening Remarks



**Juan Hernandez,
NRCS Florida State
Conservationist**

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Financial Assistance Updates

Amber Till
Assistant State Conservationist
for Program

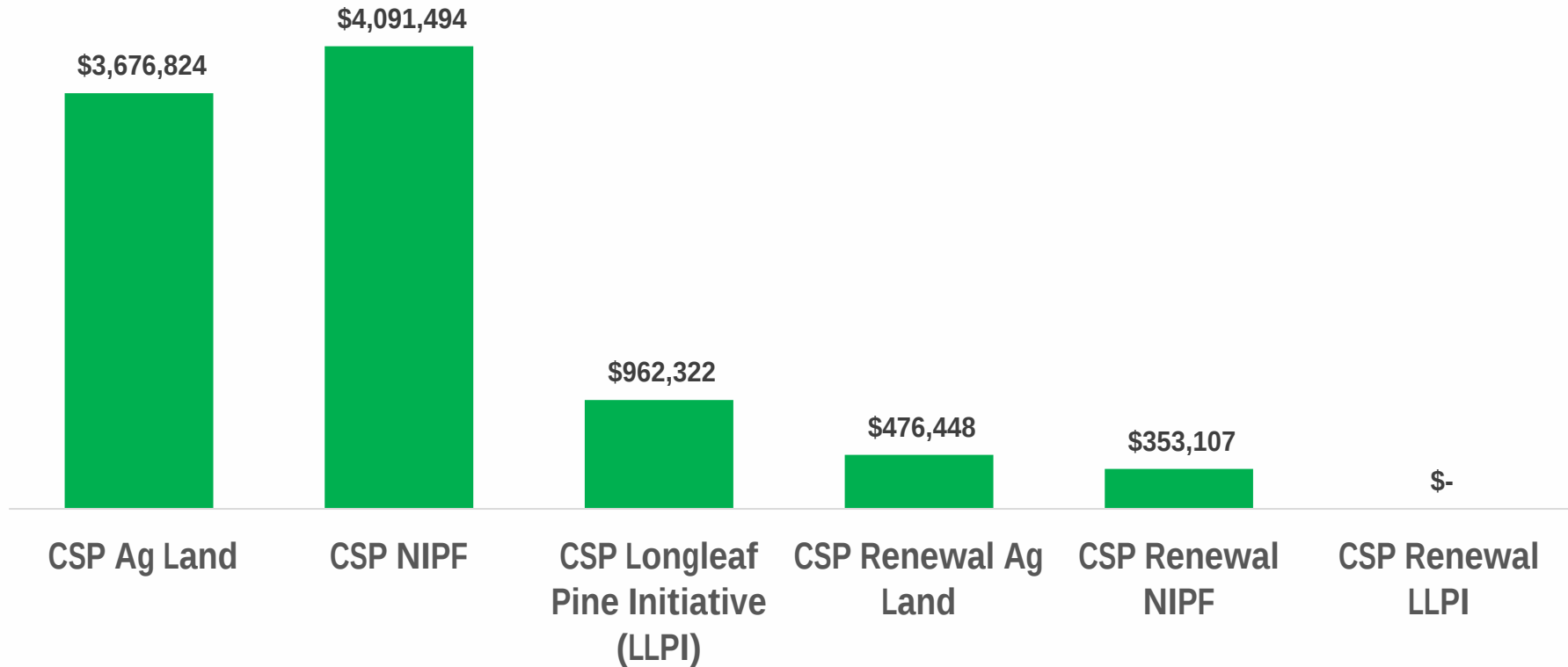
FY 2024 Financial Assistance Programs

Program	Allocations	
CSP Classic (Farm Bill)	\$	8,742,000
CSP Long Leaf Pine Initiative	\$	1,000,000
CSP IRA	\$	5,844,000
Total CSP Allocation	\$	14,586,000
EQIP Classic (Farm Bill)	\$	18,389,660
EQIP Initiatives	\$	4,517,904
EQIP IRA	\$	29,100,000
Total EQIP Allocation	\$	52,007,600
Total FY 2024 Allocation	\$	67,593,600

CSP Changes in FY 2024

- Ø **Minimum annual payment for CSP increased to \$4,000 and is applicable to all Renewal and Classic CSP contracts obligated in FY 2024**
- Ø **Historically Underserved annual payments rates for an applicant that self-certifies on the NRCS-CPA-1200 as a historically underserved producer available starting in FY 2024**
- Ø **Additional Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry Activities (CSAF) were made available for CSP funding through the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)**

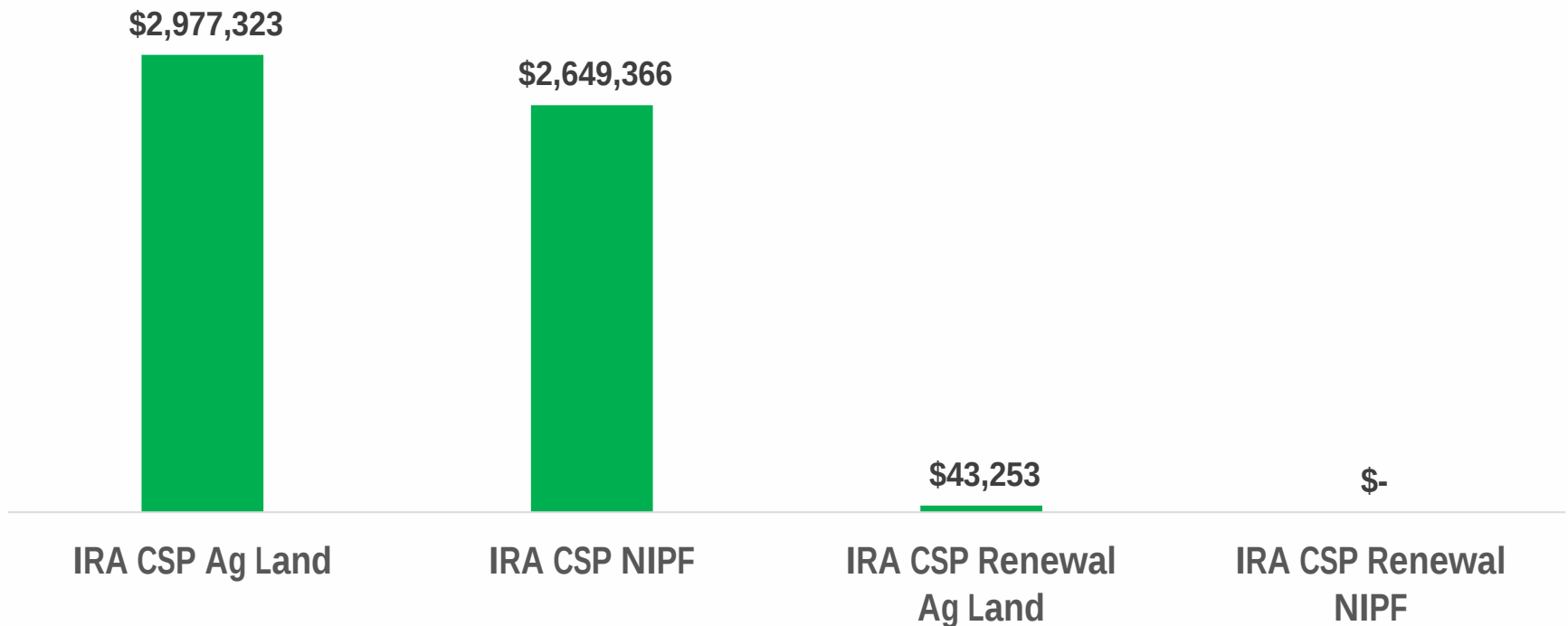
CSP (Farm Bill) Preapprovals/Obligations To-Date



FY24 CSP (Farm Bill) Allocation **\$8,742,000**

FY24 CSP LLPI (Farm Bill) Allocation **\$1,000,000**

CSP-IRA Preapprovals/Obligations To-Date



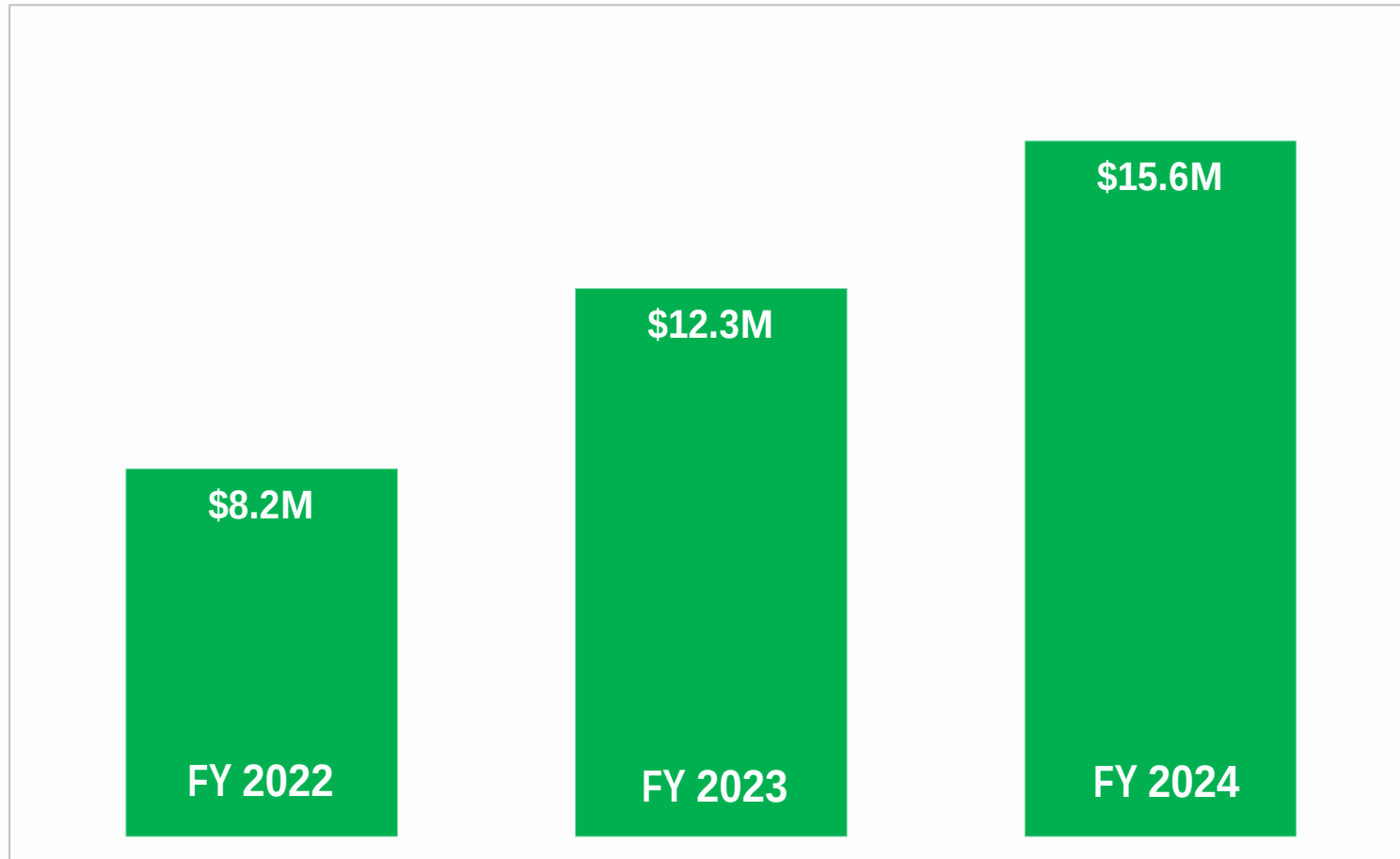
FY24 CSP-IRA Allocation

\$5,844,000



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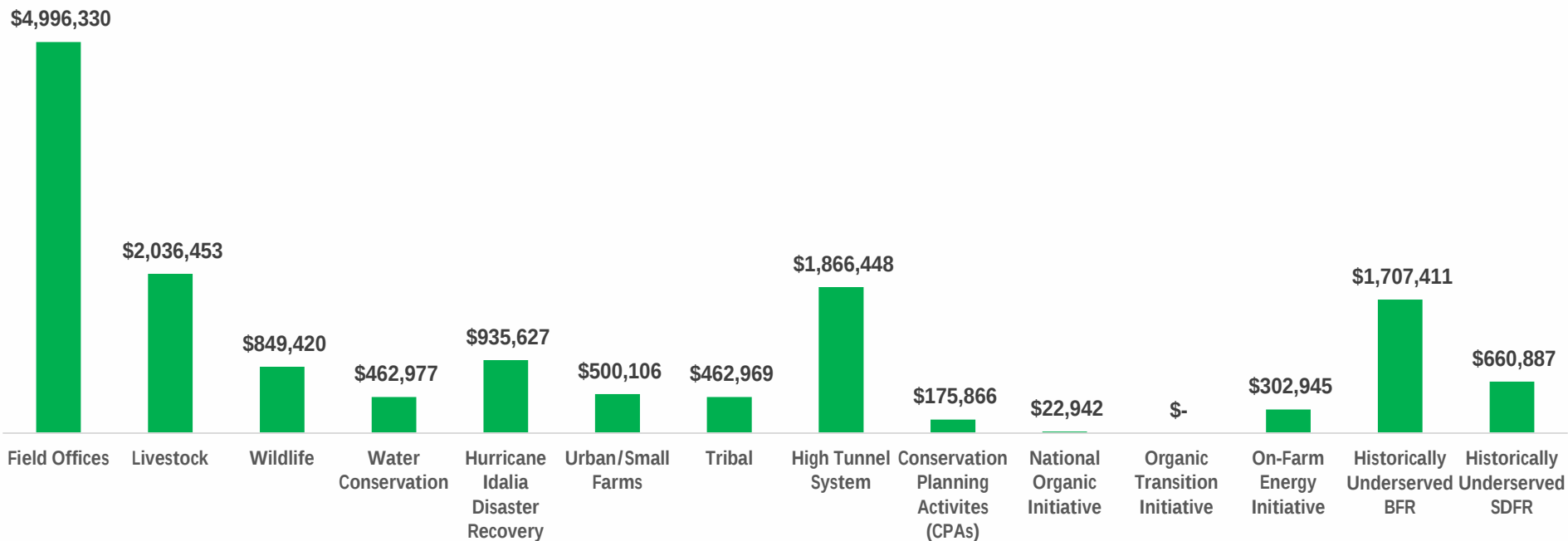
CSP 3-Year Trend



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EQIP Classic (Farm Bill) Preapprovals/Obligations To-Date



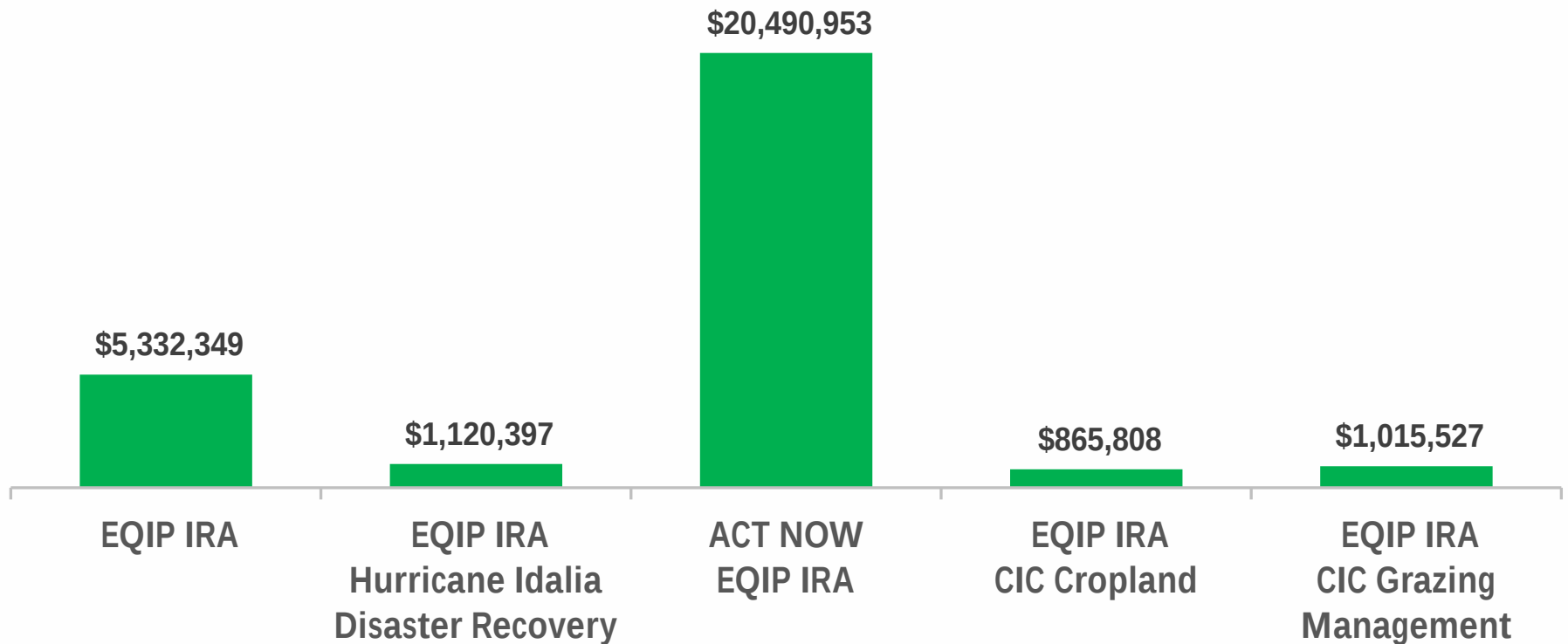
FY24 EQIP (Farm Bill) Allocation \$18,389,660

EQIP National Initiatives (Farm Bill) Preapprovals/Obligations To-Date



FY24 Longleaf Pine Initiative	\$1,717,427
FY24 WLFW Gopher Tortoise	\$1,941,422
FY24 WLFW Northern Bobwhite	\$879,085

EQIP-IRA Preapprovals/Obligations To-Date



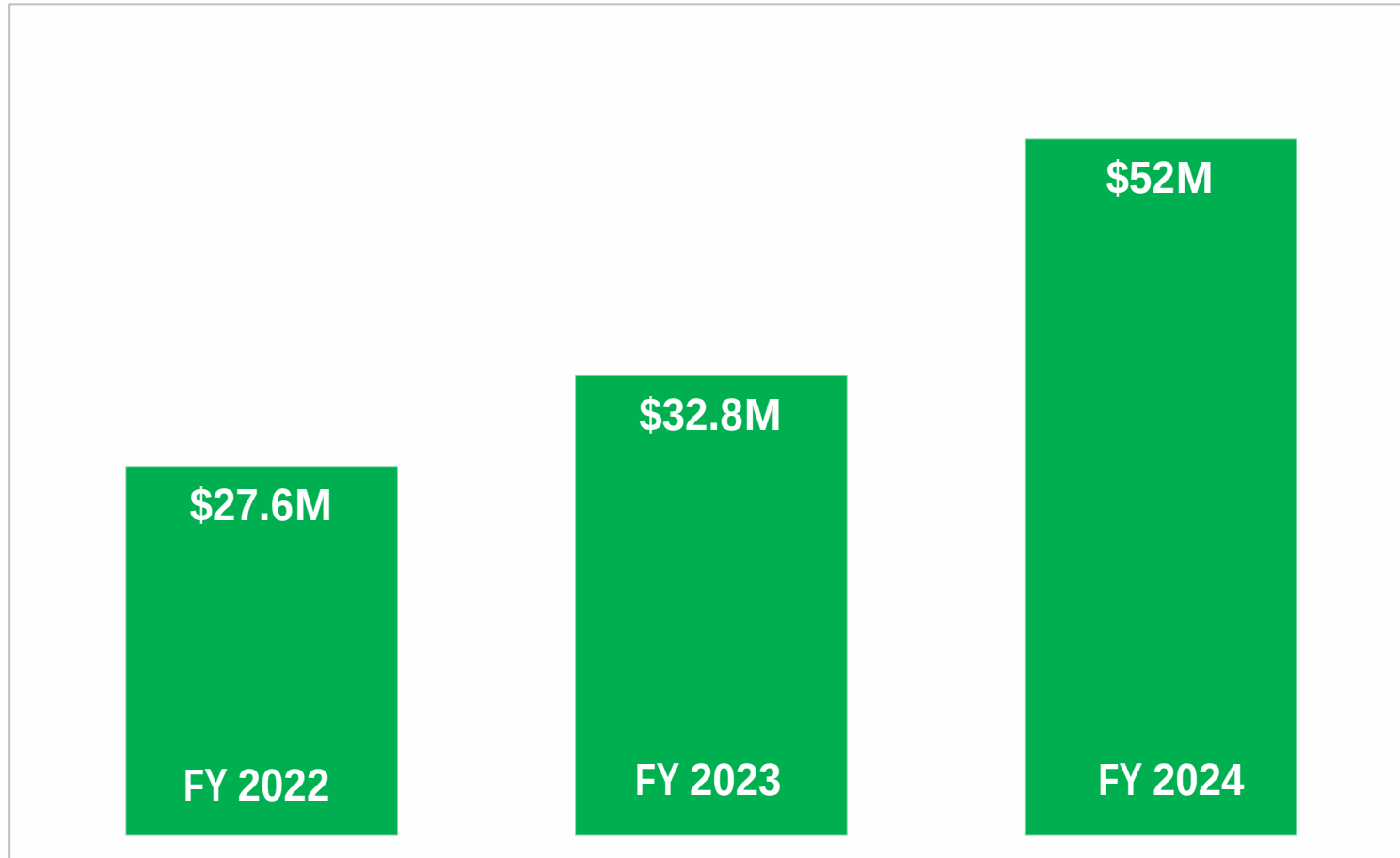
FY24 EQIP-IRA Allocation

\$29,100,000



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EQIP 3-Year Trend



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FY 2025 Florida NRCS Application/Obligation Dates

- Ø Application signup deadline: November 1, 2024
- Ø FSA farm records/determinations: January 21, 2025
- Ø NRCS completes the assessment/ranking deadline:
 - CSP (Farm Bill and IRA) by March 7, 2025
 - EQIP (Farm Bill and IRA) by April 11, 2025
- Ø NRCS obligation deadline: June 30, 2024

Questions?



Easements Updates

Sara May
Easement Program Specialist

Scott Kuipers
Natural Resources Specialist

Crenel Francis
Wetlands Reserve Easements Coordinator

Agriculture Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) Agricultural Land Easement (ALE)

FY 2024

- 10 ALE applications with a total federal share request of \$24,148,875
- Six applications selected for funding with a total federal share of \$9,514,375
- Applications from the following counties:
Charlotte, Columbia, Gilchrist, Hardee,
Highlands, Levy, Okeechobee, Suwannee

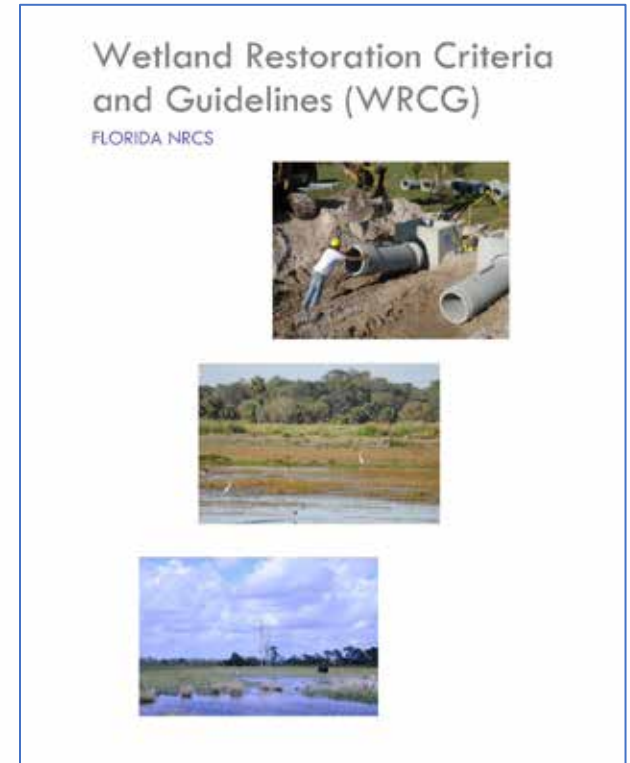
ACEP-ALE Ranking

Minor changes are proposed for the FY 2025 ALE ranking:

- Removal of Grasslands of Special Environmental Significance worksheet
- Addition of Land Evaluation and Site Assessment score to assess development pressure
- Seeking review and input from the State Technical Committee

Florida WRCG Document

- Each state is responsible for developing a state specific **Wetland Restoration Criteria and Guidelines** (WRCG) document which establishes the general framework on how they implement Wetland Restoration Easement program in their state
- WRCG describes eligible wetland types and land uses, ranking priorities, special enrollment options, typical restoration practices and restoration contracting procedures



Easement Management

- The WRCG also outlines the expected management practices to maintain these easements and when funding may be utilized for those practices.
- The document lists in detail all the activities and practices that an easement owner may request a Compatible Use Authorization (CUA) for and any limitations for those activities.
- The State Technical Committee has a 30-day review and comment period on this document.

ACEP- Wetland Reserve Easement (WRE)

FY 2023 IRA

- 17 WRE application received
- Two easement acquired -
- Totaling 2,738,113.04
- Acres = 456.15

FY 2023

- One easement acquired -
- Totaling 11,674,547.43
- Acres = 1,621.60

FY 2024

- Seven WRE applications received
- Two easement acquired –
- Totaling 9,835,980.12
- Acres = 1,644.38



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ACEP - WRE

FY 2025

WRE – Had two signup open period

- 10 applications
- Ranking has begun
- Allocation for the highest ranking will be funded in the first FY quarter.



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ACEP Budget

Current FA Remaining: \$18,991,986.65

Current TA Remaining: \$2,796,466.67

\$2,121,164 in FA funds obligated to federal assistance agreement with Trust For Tomorrow

\$734,071.22 in FA funds to be obligated to federal assistance agreement with USACE (Army Corps of Engineers) by June 14, 2024



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ACEP Staffing

Recently Filled Positions

- Realty Specialist John Gooding
- Biologist/Soil Conservationist (Easement Program Specialist) Kiersten McClintock

Positions To Be Announced

- Two Natural Resource Specialist GS-11 in Okeechobee
- Easements Natural Resource Specialist GS-401-11/12 in Gainesville State Office



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Partnerships & Initiatives Updates

Hilary Barnhart

Assistant State Conservationist for Partnerships & Initiatives

Denise Liggett

Regional Conservation Partnership Program Coordinator

Rochelle Urquhart

State Outreach Coordinator

Susie Bishop and Kayla Nickerson

Highlands Soil & Water Conservation District



What is a Local Working Group?

Local Working Groups are composed of agricultural producers, owners/operators of nonindustrial private forest land, professionals representing agricultural and natural resource interests, and individuals representing a variety of disciplines in the soil, water, wetland, plant, forestry, and wildlife sciences who are familiar with agricultural and natural resource issues in the local community.

Priority Resource Concerns

NRCS CONSERVATION PROGRAMS FY25 RESOURCE CONCERNS FLORIDA - LOCAL RANKING
County:

SWAPA +E Category		NRCS - Resource Concern	Score
1	Soil	1. Sheet and rill erosion	
		2. Wind erosion	
		3. Ephemeral gully erosion	
		4. Classic gully erosion	
		5. Bank erosion from streams, shorelines, or water conveyance channels	
		6. Subsidence	
		7. Compaction	
		8. Organic matter depletion	
		9. Concentration of salts or other chemicals	
		10. Soil organism habitat loss or degradation	
		11. Aggregate instability	
2	Water	12. Ponding and flooding	
		13. Seasonal high water table	
		14. Seeps	
		15. Drifted snow	
		16. Surface water depletion	
		17. Groundwater depletion	
		18. Naturally available moisture use	
		19. Inefficient irrigation water use	
		20. Nutrients transported to surface water	
		21. Nutrients transported to groundwater	
		22. Pesticides transported to surface water	
		23. Pesticides transported to groundwater	
		24. Pathogens and chemicals from manure, biosolids, or compost applications transported to surface water	
		25. Pathogens and chemicals from manure, biosolids, or compost applications transported to groundwater	
		26. Salts transported to surface water	
		27. Salts transported to groundwater	
		28. Petroleum, heavy metals, and other pollutants transported to surface water	
		29. Petroleum, heavy metals, and other pollutants transported to groundwater	
		30. Sediment transported to surface water	
		31. Elevated water temperature	
3	Air	32. Emissions of particulate matter (PM) and PM precursors	
		33. Emissions of greenhouse gasses (GHGs)	
		34. Emissions of ozone precursors	
		35. Objectionable odors	
4	Plants	36. Emissions of airborne reactive nitrogen	
		37. Plant productivity and health	
		38. Plant structure and composition	
		39. Plant pest pressure	
5	Animals	40. Wildfire hazard from biomass accumulation	
		41. Terrestrial habitat for wildlife and invertebrates	
		42. Aquatic habitat for fish and other organisms	
		43. Feed and forage imbalance	
		44. Inadequate livestock shelter	
6	Energy	45. Inadequate livestock water quantity, quality and distribution	
		46. Energy efficiency of equipment and facilities	
		47. Energy efficiency of farming/ranching practices and field operations	

- Each LWG decided the top 10 priority resource concerns in the LWG area (NRCS Field Office Service Area)
- Results will directly impact the Local Ranking in the Farm Bill Program Financial Assistance Programs

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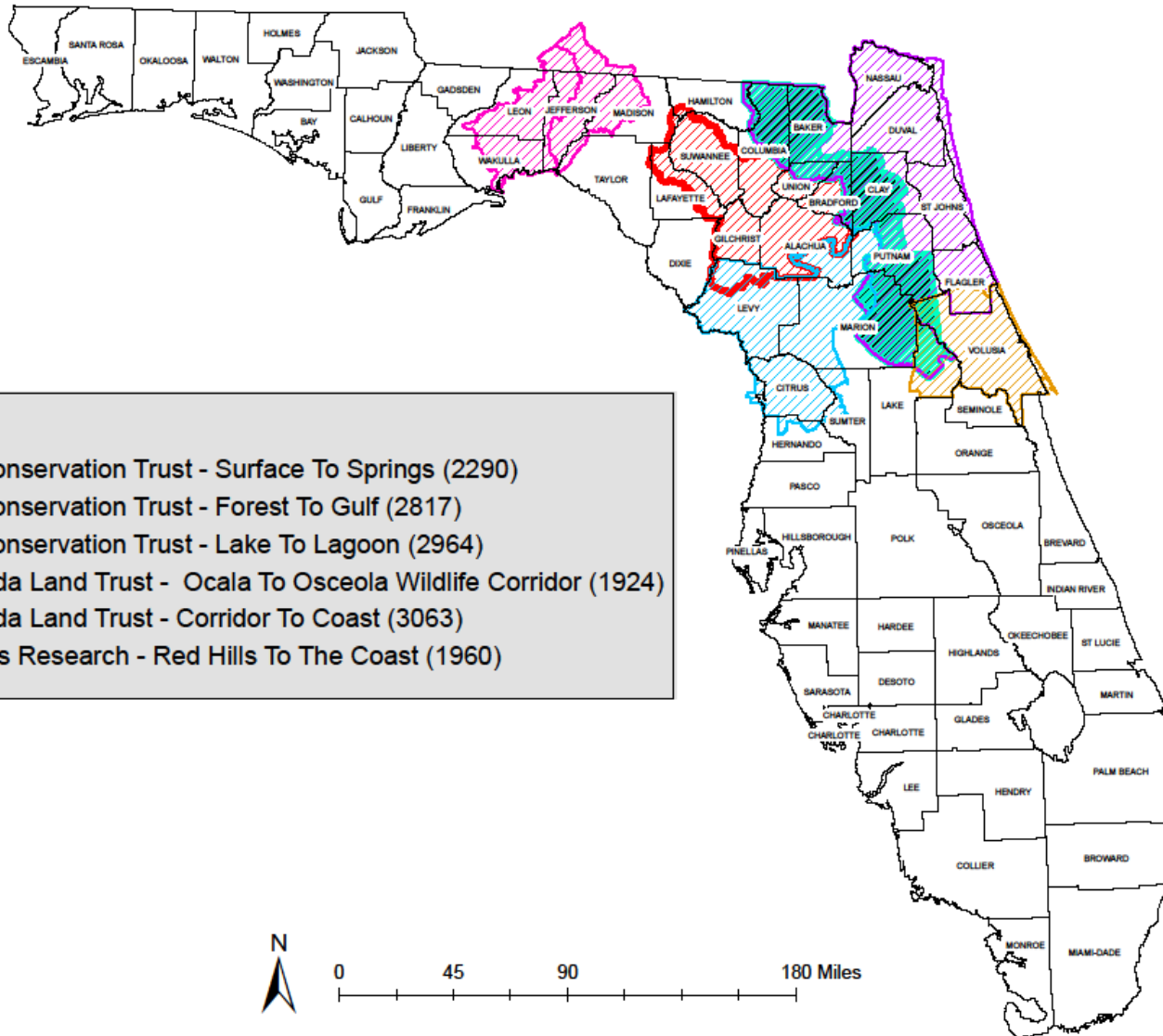


Top 10 State Priority Resource Concerns

- Plant pest pressure
- Plant productivity & health
- Nutrients transported to surface water
- Inadequate livestock water quantity, quality & distribution
- Feed & forage imbalance
- Organic matter depletion
- Wildfire hazard from biomass accumulation
- Terrestrial habitat for wildlife and invertebrates
- Groundwater depletion
- Aquatic habitat for wildlife & invertebrates



Florida Regional Conservation Partnership Program - Farm Bill 18 Projects





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RCPP
Federal
Funds

Total FA Dollars –
\$52,010,500

Financial
Assistance

Easements
\$45,822,000

All Projects
Combined

Land Management
\$6,189,000

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Federal Funds Obligated

FY 2023

Land Management \$675,000

Easements \$635,500

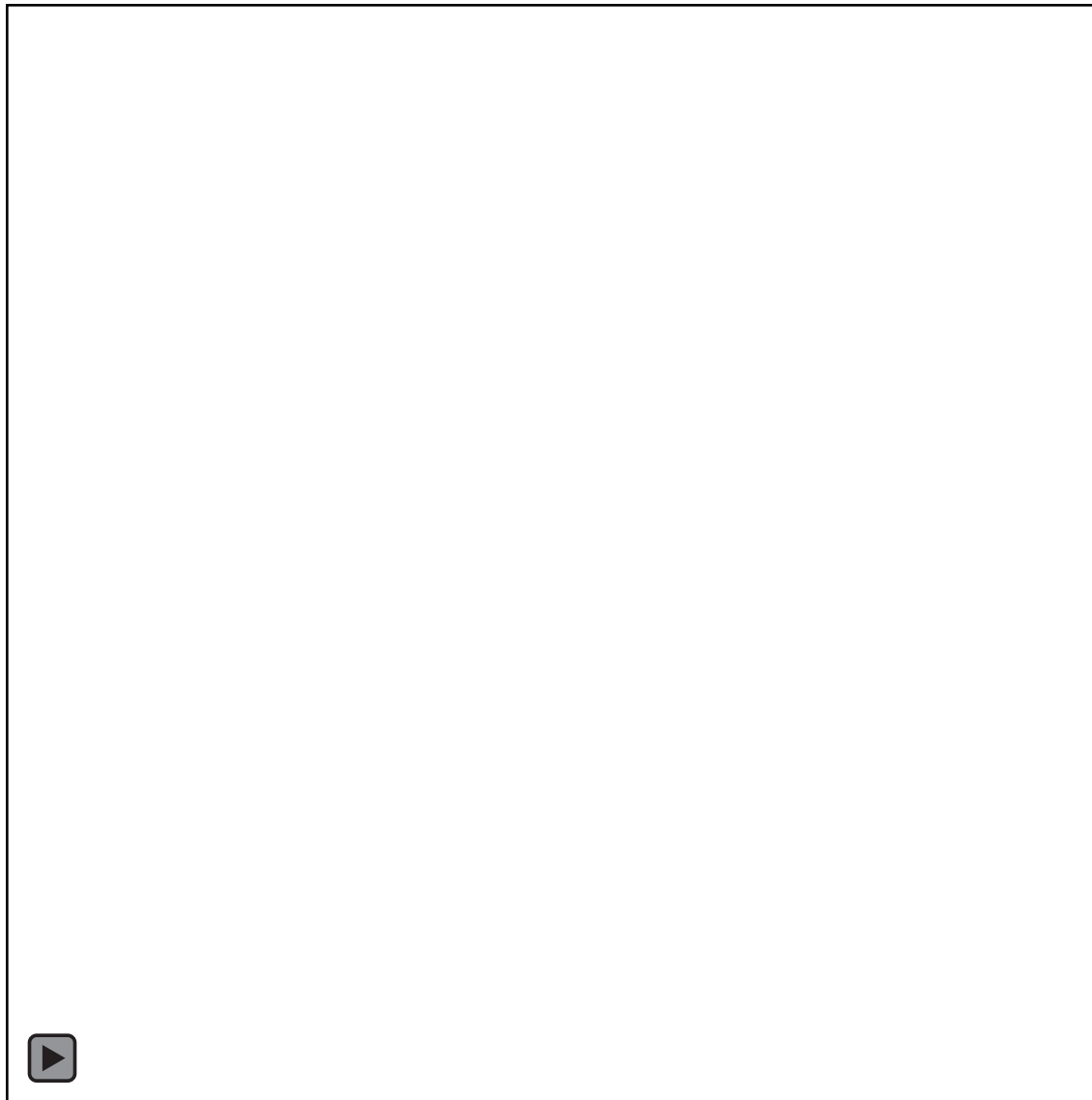
FY 2024 (estimated)

Land Management \$1,265,731

Easements \$5,026,236



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2025 Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) Notice of Funding Opportunities



Priorities:
Urban agriculture,
water conservation,
soil health and carbon
sequestration

Notice of Funding
Opportunity coming
soon!



Florida CIG

Deadline: September 30, 2024

State CIG Priorities: Urban Agriculture, Water Conservation, Soil Health and Carbon Sequestration

Eligible Applicants:

- All U.S.-based non-federal entities and individuals are eligible to apply for projects carried out in Florida

Total available: \$1,000,000

- Individual award floor: \$50,000
- Individual award ceiling: \$250,000

Cost-share:

- Applicants contribute 1:1 match. HU applicants may provide 25% of total project costs.
- Tribal applicants are not required to have any match

Project can be between 1-3 years in duration



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Overview of Dates/Timeline



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Contact

Hilary Barnhart
Assistant State Conservationist - Partnerships & Initiatives

Hilary.Barnhart@usda.gov

850-633-7204



Ecological Sciences Updates

Beverly McCarroll
Acting State Resource Conservationist

Tabled for the next STC meeting

General Discussions, Reports, Comments and Questions

