Vermont State Technical Committee Meeting

October 18, 2023
Hosted hybrid: USDA State Office, Colchester and virtually via Microsoft Teams

NEXT MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY 17, 2024

Attending (Colchester): Travis Thomason (NRCS), Bob Thompson (NRCS), Angela Hyldburg (NRCS), Luis Aponte (NRCS), John Roberts (FSA), Thomas Renner (Congresswomen Balint), Jeff Farber (VACD), Alli Lewis (VAWQP).

Attending (MS Teams): Nathan Hamilton (NRCS), Trevor Saylor (NRCS), Julia Grey (NRCS), David Blodgett (NRCS), Sarah Larose (NRCS), Eileen Powers (FSA), Sarah Waring (RD), Michelle Monroe (Senator Welch), Marli Rupe (DEC), Laura Ranker (DEC), Ryan Patch (VAAFM), Nina Gage (VAAFM), Jill Arace (VACD), Amanda Harris (VACD), Jess Miller (VACD), Jennifer Byrne (WRNRCD), Paul Hamelin (VFW), Stacy Cibula (VHCB), Vern Grubinger (UVM Extension), Brad Roy (Vermont Rural Water Association), Margaret Fowle (Audubon VT), John Thurgood (public), and two participants by phone.

Vermont USDA
State Technical Committee Meeting

October 18, 2023 | 9:30 am-12:00 pm
USDA State Office, Colchester and MS Teams

Agenda

Time	Topic	Speaker
9:30 – 9:45 am	State Conservationist Welcome and NRCS Update	Travis Thomason
9:45 – 9:55 am	Farm Service Agency Update	John Roberts
9:55 – 10:05 am	Rural Development Update	Sarah Waring
10:05 – 10:25 am	Legislative Update	Congressional Delegations
10:25 – 10:45 am	Programs Update FY23 Recap and FY24 Focus	Nathan Hamilton
10:45 – 10:50 am	Break	
10:50 – 11:20 am	Conservation Innovation Grant Update	Tom Akin
11:20 – 11:50 am	Partner Updates	
11:50 – 12:00 pm	FY24 State Technical Committee Schedule Wrap-up	Travis Thomason

Welcome and NRCS Updates:
Travis Thomason, State Conservationist, NRCS Vermont

Welcome. Thank you all for joining us. Review of the agenda.

NRCS Updates

CSP
- Received ~ $2.4 million more in applications than funding in FY23; Plan to fund these applications in FY24.
- This is the first year in the life of CSP that we were over committed.
- Thank you to all for making this happen, especially VAAFM, Soil Health and Payment for Ecosystem Services Work Group for the recommendation for the CSP Assist Program.

EQIP Disaster Assistance
- Spoke with a few producers recently and they are very grateful for the assistance this summer

Fiscal Year 2024 and the Farm Bill
- 2018 Farm Bill timeframes for most of conservation program provisions were FY 2019 – FY 2023.
- General FB program eligibility provisions do not have a deadline, including AGI, HEL/WC, Farm & Tract eligibility.
- IRA provided more than funds for GHG mitigation – IRA also modified timeframes for several programs' implementation and funding.
- ACEP, CSP, EQIP, RCPP have extended program implementation and funding provisions. Additionally, Source Water Protection provision extended.
- See presentation slides for program specific impacts.

Comments/Questions:

Question: *Jill Arace (VACD) and John Roberts (FSA)* **-** How does this impact the program payment limitations? (EQIP, $450k, CSP $200k)
Answer: *Travis Thomason (NRCS)* **-** Currently, we do not know. We are encouraging producers to sign up even if they are at the program limitation in case there is an opportunity for funding.

Farm Service Update:
John Roberts, State Executive Director, FSA Vermont

Programs:

- CRP/CREP - There is a hold on work until there is an extension/new Farm Bill.
- Disaster Programs - Transitioned into a higher gear on relief and recovery with a steady stream of applications for ECP, ELAP, EFRP, LIP, and others.
- Noninsured Crop Assistance Program (NAP) – for specialty crops, huge increase in HU producers (many signed 860 forms during the freeze in May 2023).
- Would like to see the crop insurance reviewed to better reflect Vermont/NE Agriculture. Currently designed for the big three commodities in the west.
- Hiring continues. Still having challenges with select positions.

Comments/Questions:

Question: *Jennifer Byrne (WRCD)* – Does that mean even all existing CREP applications are on hold?
Answer: *Eileen Powers (FSA)* – Anything that adds new acreage is on hold for CRP and CREP (CREP is subprogram of CRP. If CRP is on hold, CREP is on hold.) Anything that was contracted and approved by September 30, 2023 can continue. Any projects that are just starting through the pipeline cannot be approved yet. We can go through the motions, we can get everything ready to be served up, we can send out Ben and Phil and talk to people about CRP & CREP, but we cannot approve a contract yet.

Question: *Vern Grubinger (UVM Extension)* - Is there data available on total farm number and acreage reporting damage from freeze/flood, and numbers of farms getting various types of crop insurance payments?
Answer: *Eileen Powers (FSA)* – NAP (as of last week) 232 Notices of Loss (by crop, not producer). Then we do field work, they complete paperwork, then the producer can apply for payment under that program. Currently 196 applications for payment. Nearly $82,000 has been paid.
Comment: *Vern Grubinger (UVM Extension)* – It would be good to pull the data together from various sources to get a sense of what happened, what the need was and how well it was addressed. I'm willing to help aggregate the data so it is held in one report so we know what information we have and what we can learn from it.
Response: *John Roberts (FSA)* – I've mentioned this to my leadership in Washington, that we need an after action report, which covers all these issues, with cooperation from federal, state, extension, etc.
Comment: *Sarah Waring (RD)* – Perhaps data/info from UVM, NOFA, The Farm Fund, VCF, USDA, VAAFM, The B Gap Program, SBA, etc.

Comment: *Vern Grubinger (UVM Extension)* Report from Tropical Storm Irene:
https://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/Pubs/ImpactIreneVermontAgriculture.pdf
Unfortunately, it did not include a section on what we learned or what we could do better.

Rural Development Update:
Sarah Waring, State Director, RD VT/NH

To our NRCS/FSA colleagues, THANK YOU for supporting my team in Montpelier for use of office space, printing, use of GOVs, etc.

Program Updates

- Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) – The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) allows this work to continue (if there is a lapse in funding). Tracy Rexford is the Business Loan Specialist (Energy Coordinator). He joined the team last year. Vermont March round had 25 successful applications with total funding of over $5 million. (Over last 10 years, average per year for VT and NH combined has been $1-1.8 million.) Still scoring June round.
- REAP IRA – FY24-FY27, $180 million per year, for the county. We have funding to get solar on every farm and digesters on every dairy that wants them.
    - FY23 - $9 million in application, even though we only funded $5+ million
- REAP IRA gave us a "set aside" for what are called underutilized technologies and technical assistance.
    - Between July 13 to August 13 there was a national competition to apply for a REAP TA Program, run at the state level.
    - Unfortunately, there were no applications from Vermont partners, there were non-local applications that received funding. (NH received a local application.)
    - Names of technical assistance providers will be provided after Grants and Agreements are signed.

    - My goal is to connect these non-Vermont entities into the Vermont system, make sure that they understand their roles and responsibilities and that they understand who is already in the ecosystem for technical service providers within the state and how they can work closely with all of you to be able to accelerate successful applications to the program.
- At the end of last year, three successful Vermont value added producer grants, that was almost $1,000,000 in total.
- Anticipate another Meat and Poultry processing grant expansion program round coming out the beginning of FY24, because it is ARPA funding and not our regular appropriations to the Farm Bill.

Comments/Questions:

Question: *Vern Grubinger (UVM Extension)* – Can you just elaborate a little. All of that potential money for solar panels and digesters? That's all in REAP. Is that true? How much for Vermont over the next "x" years?
Answer: *Sarah Waring (RD)* – That is correct. $180 million every year between now of FY27 and we have the potential to be drawing down as much of that as we can manage to get with successful applications. We might get a state allocation, but the way our funding works is that if we have successful applications and we exceed our state allocation, we put those successful applications in the national pool to compete for any pooled funding from other states that does not get obligated. So, if we wanted to, we could really lift the bar for Vermont and draw down as much of that money every year as possible.

Risk Management Agency Update:

Comment: *Jennifer Byrne (WRCD)* – Just to bring in RMA programs here to this USDA update, the White River Conservation District is hosting workshops this winter on RMA insurance programs, namely PRF (pasture/rangeland/forage rainfall insurance) and whole farm/micro farm insurance. Our PRF info session is Oct 26 @ 11:30am. Sign up for PRF is December 1. Register on our website: www.Whiterivernrcd.org/news-and-events

---

Legislative Updates
Senator Sander's Office
- No one present/No update

Senator Welch's Office
Michelle Monroe, Communications and Outreach Representative, michelle_monroe@welch.senate.gov

- Notes have been taken on the issues you are facing without having a current Farm Bill.
- A continuing resolution on the Farm Bill is anticipated, given the current state of the House.
- Farm Bill negotiations are proceeding in the Senate. Not likely to be a major increase in spending.
    - Dairy Business Innovation Center (DBIC) - Priorities are protecting/promoting funding.
    - Organic Dairy Bill - Working with NOFA and others, which should be coming out soon with the broader Farm Bill. Specifically with reporting and data on organic dairies, which currently do not exist, hopefully leading to an organic dairy safety net.
    - Opportunities in Organics Act – to increase funding and technical assistance for organic transition.
    - Farm to School – Continuing to support this program

  - Disaster Assistance Programs – Supporting efforts with Senator Brown to make changes to the Whole-Farm Revenue Protection (WFRP) program because we've heard that NAP isn't a good solution for our small, diverse farms. WFRP is intended to be that solution but hasn't been because of several identified problems with the initial program, which this change hopes to resolve.
  - Buffer Act – Simple language changes that stops the requirement for buffers being a barrier to CRPs paying for buffers.
  - Priority to be sure none of the IRA funding gets lost.

Comments/Questions:

Question: *Jennifer Byrne (WRCD)* – How about creating insurance subsidies for implementing conservation? (i.e., reducing risk)
Answer: *Michelle Monroe (Senator Welch's Office)* – One of the things with the WFRP program is that we're arguing for increasing the subsidies for that insurance on the grounds that the small diverse farms have lower risk. So, there are places where we're doing that. But I like the idea about implementing, if you're involved in conservation practices, that you could get some insurance subsidy. I will bring that up to our team.

Question: *Marli Rupe (DEC)* – Any talk about making emergency programs NOT be in the $450K cap? Some farms were unable to access EQIP funds because they'd hit the cap.
Answer: *Michelle Monroe (Senator Welch's Office)* – Our team has discussed that, but I will raise it again and let you know what I hear back.

Congresswoman Balint's Office
Thomas Renner, Community Liaison and Constituent Services Representative, thomas.renner@mail.house.gov
- Still no Speaker of the House
- The request is as soon as there is a speaker, they take on appropriation
- Introduced the Buffer Act in the House

NRCS Programs Update
Nathan Hamilton, Acting Assistant State Conservationist for Programs

FY 2023 Program Obligations (*See slides for details*)
- Obligated over $21 million and 439 Contracts (individual producers) – Obligation amount may be a new record for VT.
- Review of each Program Obligation (General and IRA)
- EQIP Disaster Assistance – Obligated over $4.3 million and 88 Contracts in just over 3 weeks

FY 2024 Advisory Allocations
- ACEP-ALE – $2.6 million
- ACEP-WRE – $500K
- CSP (classic & renewal) – $1.6 million
- EQIP General - $7.7 million
- EQIP – Golden Wing Warbler Initiative - $263K
- EQIP National Water Quality Initiative - $681K
- EQIP-IRA – $12.3 million ($900K FY23)
- CSP-IRA – $1 million ($500K FY23)

FY 2024 Program Application Consideration Cutoff Dates (*See slides for details*)

- AMA, CSP, EQIP, RCPP-LMR: Application Cutoff – October 20, 2023
- RCPP-Easements, ACEP: Application Cutoff – February 2, 2024
- Hoping to be 100% obligated by June 30, 2024
- Goal to have earlier sign-up for FY25, to begin planning in the field in fall 2024 before the snow

State Priority Resource Concerns (*See slides for details*)

- EQIP
  - Water Quality, Soil, Habitat and Forest
  - No change from FY23
- CSP
  - Agriculture Land Ranking Pools
  - Non-Industrial Private Forestland Ranking Pools
  - No change from FY23

Getting Ready for FY 2025 (*See slides for details*)

- Subcommittee meetings will be earlier this year
- Details available in the slides and on the Vermont State Technical Committee website
- Review of Goals for each subcommittee and workgroup

Comments/Questions:

Question: *John Roberts (FSA*) – There didn't seem to be any RCPP out of the St. Albans office. Is there a reason for that?
Answer: *Nathan Hamilton (NRCS)* – It wasn't because of lack of applications or need. We are reviewing the ranking questions to better understand for FY24 to get more people serviced. Given the number of applications we have, we will be opening grazing in EQIP for FY24. They will be ranked in all pools EQIP, RCPP 18 or EQIP-IRA. As you saw, there's a lot of money in IRA and between the core and facilitating practices, most of the grazing can fit into that.

Question: *Vern Grubinger (UVM Extension*) – Do we have data on the top EQIP practices funded? (*See slide that was added to the presentation after to answer this question.*)
Answer: *Nathan Hamilton (NRCS)* – Covered this data in August. Will update data and add slide to presentation. Top Practices: Brush Management, Cover Crop, Forest Stand Improvement, Feed Management, Pasture and Hay Planting, Residue and Tillage Management

- Review of **FY2024 Ranking Pools and State Spending Plan Draft**
- This matrix is driven by the data and recommendations from subcommittees and local work groups
- FY24 we will be doing a CPI with an independent consultant for local work groups

---

BREAK

Conservation Innovation Grants (*See slides for details*)
Tom Akin, State Agronomist on behalf of Joe Buford, State Recourse Conservationist

Purpose of CIG:

- Support partners to develop new tools, approaches, practices, and technologies to further natural resource conservation on private lands.

- National Level Competition (Classic "Big Idea" Projects and On-Farm Trials)
- State Level Competition
- https://cig.sc.egov.usda.gov/

FY 2023 VT NRCS CIG Funding (*See slides for details*)
- American Farmland Trust, NOFA VT, and UVM - $200K to develop climate resilience strategies and climate adaptation plans for VT farms
- American Forest Foundation - $199K to set carbon markets baselines for VT forest operations
- UVM Extension - $50K to refine IPM Best Management Practices for high-tunnel farmers
- VT Audubon Society - $176K to develop an assessment/ prioritization tool for bird and pollinator habitats

FY 2024 Notice of funding is TBD due to expiration of Farm Bill

VT NRCS CIG Spotlight – FY 2022: Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets
- **Project Title:** Linking Farm Phosphorus Reduction Planner (FarmPREP) to Agricultural Soil Health and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Modeling in Vermont
- **Purpose:** Is to provide agricultural soil health, and agricultural greenhouse gas tracking, quantification, verification, and reporting for the State of Vermont utilizing the Farm Phosphorus Reduction Planner (Farm-PREP).
- **Award Amount:** $487,000

USDA NRCS – Conservation Innovation Grants: Vermont State Program (*See slides for details*)
Ryan Patch, Agriculture Climate and Land Use Policy Manager, VAAFM

State Government Perspective on CIG and why the VAAFM applied for this grant.
- Story/History on how science informs policy
- Review of information and research data that lead to the project
- Align proposal with Agency priorities
- Understanding of and access to Grants.gov and review of Application Packet Checklist

Summary of the Project: Linking Farm Phosphorus Reduction Planner (FarmPREP) to Agricultural Soil Health and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Modeling in Vermont
- Seven discrete areas of work
- State Priorities being addressed: Soil Health Priority; Climate Smart Agriculture
- Call for producers to participate in the research initiative
- Stone Environmental, contractor assisting with literature review and subsequent calibration work
- 2-year project with Task 1 (GHG Emission Model Comparison) and Task 2 (Add Carbon emissions to Farm-PREP) being the largest

Final Report: CIG Report-LinkingFarmPreptoTMDL.pdf (vermont.gov)

Questions/Comments:

Comment: *Jennifer Bryne (WRNRCD)* – How is agency of ag squaring this continued work with the unanimous recommendation of the PES working group that they did not want an outcome based program that puts a price on nature?
Answer: *Ryan Patch (VAAGFM)* – The Agency of Agriculture is running the CSP Assist Program, which was the program that was recommended by the Payment for Ecosystem Services Working Group. That is something that we are supporting in conjunction with NRCS and will be seeking additional funding to keep that program running. This is an efficient program, which we are seeing great results from farmers

that are looking at phosphorus reductions and as a way to incentivize a farmer's continued adoption and expanded adoption of conservation practices, bundling the co-benefits and how to track reductions towards a Global Warming Solutions act. We need a framework for both phosphorus accounting and climate accounting, and this provides a holistic assessment of a whole farm and enables the potential to stack and pay for that benefit. I don't know if I necessarily agree with that unanimous recommendation for forever, right? This isn't commodifying nature, this is quantifying the benefits that come from a farmers change in management and then the ability to provide them both credit for the great work they're doing in the phosphorus, and now the climate arena. And if we can provide incentive payments, then in addition to that, we've got a lot of farmers that are interested in participating in those programs. We are going to move forward with pursuing that and a comparison of an efficiency between practice based and performance based programs. There's a lot to be said about scale that can come from looking at a whole farm against some performance metrics. So, I think they are as perfectly able to be squared.
VPFP is working through CSP Assist, which is the recommendation, and this is the VAAFM's approach to the next steps of phosphorus tracking accounting as well as climate.

Partner Update: UVM Extension
Vern Grubinger, Extension Professor: Vegetable and Berry Specialist

Coming from a conversation with Joe Buford, we concluded that nearly all member farms of the Vermont Vegetable Berry Growers Association are eligible in one way or another for the NRCS Programs. And other than high tunnels, participation could be a lot greater. Looking at the amount of money you're going to have, there are so many things our growers would be interested in if they know there was funding available. The challenge is these operations have very limited management capacity. Often one or two people trying to do everything.

Developed a concept which is ….
What if NRCS contracted with their association, the Vermont Vegetable Berry Growers Association?

Pre identify a small number of practices; clear levels of payment and we bypass the need for the growers to go through all the agency processes. Use a Google form and we figure out a way to track deliverables and whatever it is the agency needed. There is a lot of social capital in that organization.

Not sure of the next steps, by the leadership of VVBGA are very excited. And there are other associations in Vermont that could utilize this model.

Comment: *Travis Thomason (NRCS)* – This concept could align nicely with the agency priorities (DEIA, Urban Ag, Climate Smart Ag, Employee and Partners). I'm super interested in the paper you've developed because I think we do have some options to reach out to those producers. CSP just announced for fiscal year 2024 that the annual minimum payment is now $4000 a year. CSP is a five year program, so there's $20,000 regardless of the size of your operation. I think every farm in Vermont should be in the CSP program, and I think that would be particularly useful for smaller scale operations.

Partner Update: VACD
Jill Arace, Executive Director

VACD signed a cooperative agreement with NRCS for $1.8 million. It's a two year agreement primarily with IRA funds and has three elements:

1. Strengthening locally led conservation: Travis mentioned the local work groups and the local funding pools. This is a process that's led from the ground up by the conservation districts, with the goal of

focusing on community identified needs, including serving underserved and community engagement with underserved populations.
2. Technical assistance for climate smart practices: VACD and Conservation District staff provide conservation planners, GIS technicians, and other staff who do on the ground work for the conservation planning to get people contracted with NRCS for financial assistance.
3. Supporting NRCS operations: The RCPP programs will be hiring an RCPP Coordinator (or two) to assist NRCS with linking partners and coordinating those programs.

Partner Update: Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB)
Stacy Cibula, Agricultural Director

SAVE THE DATE:

Statewide Conservation Conference
Monday, June 3, 2024
Vermont State University – Randolph
Theme: (will be around) Landscape Scale Conservation

Looking for additional members to join the planning committee if you are interested.

Wrap-up
Travis Thomason, State Conservationist, NRCS Vermont

Reminders:
- October 20, 2023 – FY24 application deadline for producers
- Producers should sign-up even if they have met the $450K EQIP cap.

Vermont NRCS FY Conservation Delivery Plan (*See slide/Gant chart for details*)
- Organized by fiscal year, calendar of dates and due dates
- Shows how the work of the State Technical Subcommittees impacts the work for the next FY
- Final Subcommittee reports in July 2024 to support the work for FY25
- August 23, 2024 – FY25 application deadline for producers
- Repeat process for each fiscal year

Future meetings:
- January 17, 2024, 9:30 am – 12:00 pm
- April 17, 2024, 9:30 am – 12:00 pm
- July 17, 2024, 9:30 am – 12:00 pm
- Fall 2024 – Field Tour to highlight partner projects (details to come)

Thank you so much.
Meeting adjourned at 11:53 am

Welcome to the …

VT State Technical Committee Meeting – October 18, 2023

Ground Rules for Hybrid Meetings

REMOTE attendees:

- MUTE your microphone in TEAMs
- Attendance: Type your name, title and affiliation into the chat
- Questions: “Raise your hand” or type your question in the chat
- **Important reminder:** The chat is for questions or comments relevant to the current topic/presentation. Please do not have “side conversations” in the chat

IN-PERSON attendees:

- Attendance: Sign in on the attendance sheet
- We are using a video camera, “Poly” which is in the south-east corner of the room
  - Talk clearly and look towards the Poly
  - If logged into TEAMs, mute your microphone, speaker and camera
  - Poly will serve as the microphone, speaker, and camera for the room
  - Please avoid side conversations as the Poly will pick them up and make it difficult for Teams participants to hear and it will distort the recording and transcript
- Questions: Raise your hand or use the chat in Teams

Agenda

Time	Topic	Speaker
9:30 – 9:45 am	State Conservationist Welcome and NRCS Update	Travis Thomason
9:45 – 9:55 am	Farm Service Agency Update	John Roberts
9:55 – 10:05 am	Rural Development Update	Sarah Waring
10:05 – 10:25 am	Legislative Update	Congressional Delegations
10:25 – 10:45 am	Programs Update FY23 Recap and FY24 Focus	Nathan Hamilton
10:45 – 10:50 am	Break	
10:50 – 11:20 am	Conservation Innovation Grant Update	Tom Akin
11:20 – 11:50 am	Partner Updates	
11:50 – 12:00 pm	FY24 State Technical Committee Schedule Wrap-up	Travis Thomason

United States Department of Agriculture

FY 2024 – What does this Fiscal Year Mean for Farm Bill Programs?

Martha Joseph,
Acting Director,
NRCS Easement Programs Division

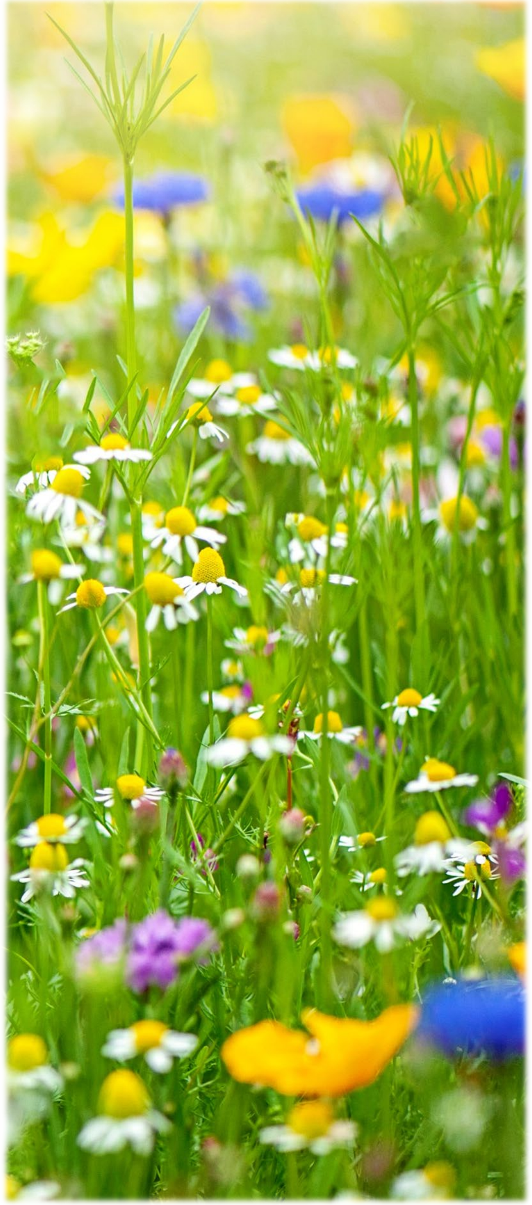
October 10, 2023

Overview

- 2018 Farm Bill timeframes for most of conservation program provisions were FY 2019 – FY 2023.
- General FB program eligibility provisions do not have a deadline, including AGI, HEL/WC, Farm & Tract eligibility.
- IRA provided more than funds for GHG mitigation – IRA also modified timeframes for several programs’ implementation and funding.
- ACEP, CSP, EQIP, RCPP have extended program implementation and funding provisions. Additionally, Source Water Protection provision extended.

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

- Program statute does not have any implementation deadlines.
- 2018 Farm Bill established funding through FY 2023.
- IRA revised ACEP authority in two ways--
  - Provided IRA funding for easements that most effectively mitigate GHG emissions.
  - Extended regular program funding through FY 2031.

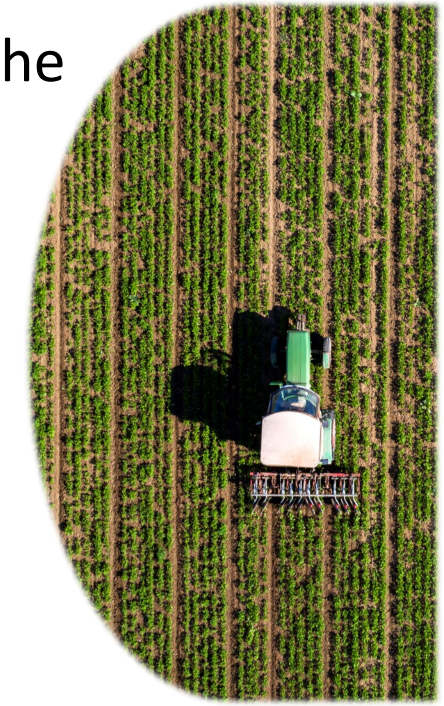


ACEP Program Funding Authority

Section 1241(a)(2) of the Food Security Act (16 U.S.C. 3841(a)(2)):

(2) The agricultural conservation easement program under subtitle H using to the maximum extent practicable—

(A) $400,000,000 for fiscal year 2014;
(B) $425,000,000 for fiscal year 2015;
(C) $450,000,000 for fiscal year 2016;
(D) $500,000,000 for fiscal year 2017;
(E) $250,000,000 for fiscal year 2018; and
(F) $450,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through ~~2023~~ 2031.



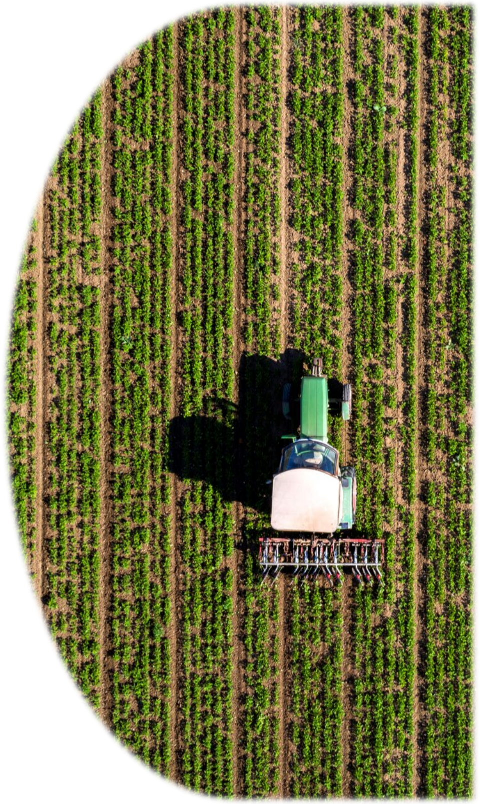
Notes:

These funds **ARE NOT** subject to IRA limitations regarding use for only for mitigation of GHG emissions nor is expenditure of the funds required by September 30, 2031.

IRA-ACEP Funding Authority

Section 21001(a)(3) of IRA:

(A) $100,000,000 for fiscal year 2023;
(B) $200,000,000 for fiscal year 2024;
(C) $500,000,000 for fiscal year 2025; and
(D) $600,000,000 for fiscal year 2026….



Notes:
These funds **must be** used to enroll easements or interests in land that will best address mitigation of GHG emissions and must be expended by September 30, 2031.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

- Program statute had original enrollment time frame of FY 2019 through FY 2023

- 2018 Farm Bill established funding through FY 2023

IRA Modifications to CSP

- Extended program implementation authority through FY 2031
- Provided IRA funding to mitigate GHG emissions through FY 2031
- Extended regular program funding through FY 2031
- Extended organic production allocation through FY 2031
- Extended 5% funding for BFR and SDFR through FY 2031

CSP Other Deadlines Remain the Same

Other CSP deadlines not extended beyond FY 2023, including—

- $200,000 payment limitation*
- Conservation Grassland Initiative (CGI) (Based on ARC-PLC Base
  - Acreage Eligibility that has FY 2023 timeframe)

Other Deadlines —

- Contract limitations are established by regulation and have no deadline

* Payment limitation may be enforced in FY 2024 through contract

CSP Program Funding Authority

Section 1241(a)(3)(B):

(B) for the conservation stewardship program under subchapter B of that chapter—

(i) $700,000,000 for fiscal year 2019;
(ii) $725,000,000 for fiscal year 2020;
(iii) $750,000,000 for fiscal year 2021;
(iv) $800,000,000 for fiscal year 2022; and
(v) $1,000,000,000 for ~~fiscal year 2023~~ each of fiscal years 2023 through 2031.

Notes:

These funds **are not** subject to IRA limitations regarding use only for GHG mitigation or expenditure by September 30, 2031.

IRA-CSP Funding Authority

Section 21001(a)(2)

(2) to carry out [CSP]–

(A)(i) $250,000,000 for fiscal year 2023;

(ii) $500,000,000 for fiscal year 2024;

(iii) $1,000,000,000 for fiscal year 2025; and

(iv) $1,500,000,000 for fiscal year 2026; and

Notes:

CSP funds must directly address mitigation of GHG emissions and **must be** expended by September 30, 2031.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

- Program statute had original enrollment time frame of FY 2019 through FY 2023

- 2018 Farm Bill established funding through FY 2023

IRA Modifications to EQIP

- Extended program implementation authority through FY 2031
- Provided IRA funding to mitigate GHG emissions through FY 2031
- Extended regular program funding through FY 2031
- Extended organic production allocation through FY 2031
- Extended wildlife allocation through FY 2031
- Extended wildlife allocation through FY 2031
- Increased air quality funding from $25m to $37.5m annually through FY 2031
- Increased OFCIT funding from $25m to $50m annually through FY 2031
- Extended 5% funding for BFR and SDFR through FY 2031

EQIP Deadlines That Were Not Extended

Deadlines not extended beyond FY 2023*, include —

- $450,000 payment limitation
- $140,000 organic payment limitation
- $200,000 regulatory payment limitation for CIC
- $900,000 regulatory payment limitation for WME
- 50% livestock allocation *(remains agnecy priority in State allocation letter)*

*Payment limitations may be enforced in FY 2024 through contract

EQIP Program Funding Authority

Section 1241(a)(3)(A):

(A) for the environmental quality incentives program under subchapter A of that chapter—

(i) $1,750,000,000 for fiscal year 2019;

(ii) $1,750,000,000 for fiscal year 2020;

(iii) $1,800,000,000 for fiscal year 2021;

(iv) $1,850,000,000 for fiscal year 2022; and

(v) $2,025,000,000 for ~~fiscal year 2023~~ each of fiscal years 2023 through 2031;

Note

These funds **are not** subject to IRA limitations regarding use only for GHG mitigation or expenditure by September 30, 2031.

IRA-EQIP Funding Authority

Section 21001(a)(1) of IRA:

(1) to carry out, using the facilities and authorities of the Commodity Credit Corporation, the environmental quality incentives program under subchapter A of chapter 4 of subtitle D of title XII of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3839aa through 3839aa-8)—

(A)(i) $250,000,000 for fiscal year 2023;
(ii) $1,750,000,000 for fiscal year 2024;
(iii) $3,000,000,000 for fiscal year 2025; and
(iv) $3,450,000,000 for fiscal year 2026;

Notes:

- IRA-EQIP funds must directly address mitigation of GHG emissions.
- Funds **must be** expended by **September 30, 2031**.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

- Program statute does not have implementation deadlines
- 2018 Farm Bill established funding through FY 2023
- IRA revised RCPP authority as follow--
  - Provided IRA funding to mitigate GHG emissions through FY 2031
  - Extended regular program funding through FY 2031

There are no other deadlines associated with RCPP statutory authority

RCPP Program Funding Authority

Section 1271D(a) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3871d(a)):

(a) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.

The Secretary shall use $300,000,000 of the funds of the Commodity Credit Corporation for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2031~~2023~~ to carry out the program.

Note:

These funds **are not** subject to IRA limitations regarding use only for GHG mitigation or expenditure by September 30, 2031.

IRA-RCPP Funding Authority

Section 21001(a)(4)

(A)(i) $250,000,000 for fiscal year 2023;

(ii) $800,000,000 for fiscal year 2024;

(iii) $1,500,000,000 for fiscal year 2025; and

(iv) $2,400,000,000 for fiscal year 2026; and

Notes:

- Funds subject to condition that partnership agreements supporting GHG emissions are prioritized.
- No limitations to the number of Alternative Funding Arrangements.
- Funds **must be** expended by **September 30, 2031.**

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

IRA did not extend CRP acreage enrollment cap beyond FY 2023

IRA did extend authority to use CCC funds, facilities, and authorities for CRP, including for provision of technical assistance as follows:

> *SEC. 1241. [16 U.S.C. 3841] COMMODITY CREDIT CORPORATION.*
> *(a) ANNUAL FUNDING.—For each of fiscal years 2014 through ~~2023~~2031, the Secretary shall use the funds, facilities, and authorities of the Commodity Credit Corporation to carry out the following programs under this title (including the provision of technical assistance):*
>
> *(1) The conservation reserve program under subchapter B of chapter 1 of subtitle D…*

Additional guidance for NRCS assistance to CRP is under development

Funding Expired for Following Farm Bill Programs in FY2023

Additional NRCS Farm Bill Programs

- Wetland Mitigation Banking Pilot
- Voluntary Public Access-Habitat Incentives Program
- Feral Swine Pilot program
- Healthy Forests Reserve Program (authorization of approps.)

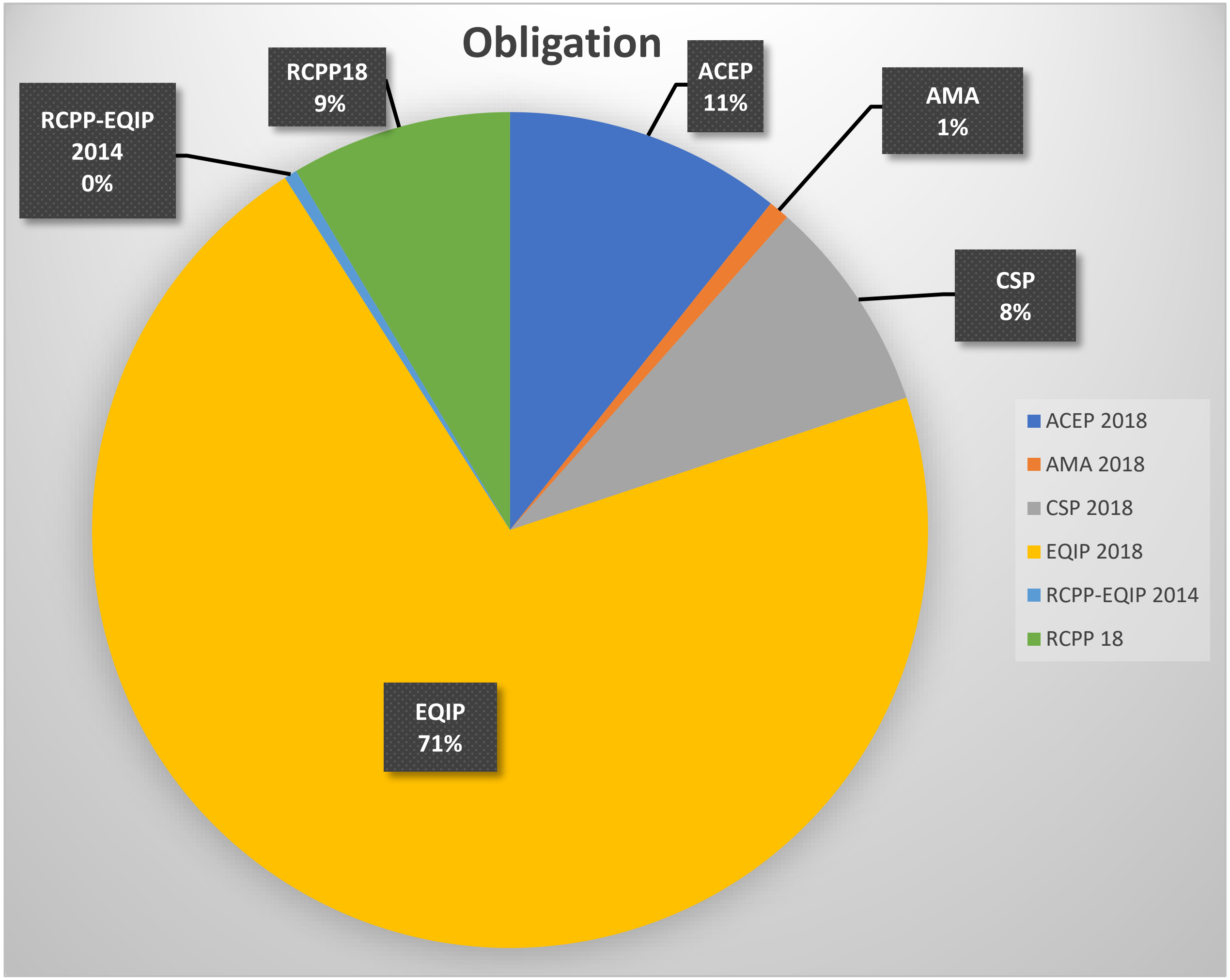
Questions?

October 18, 2023

VT State Technical Committee

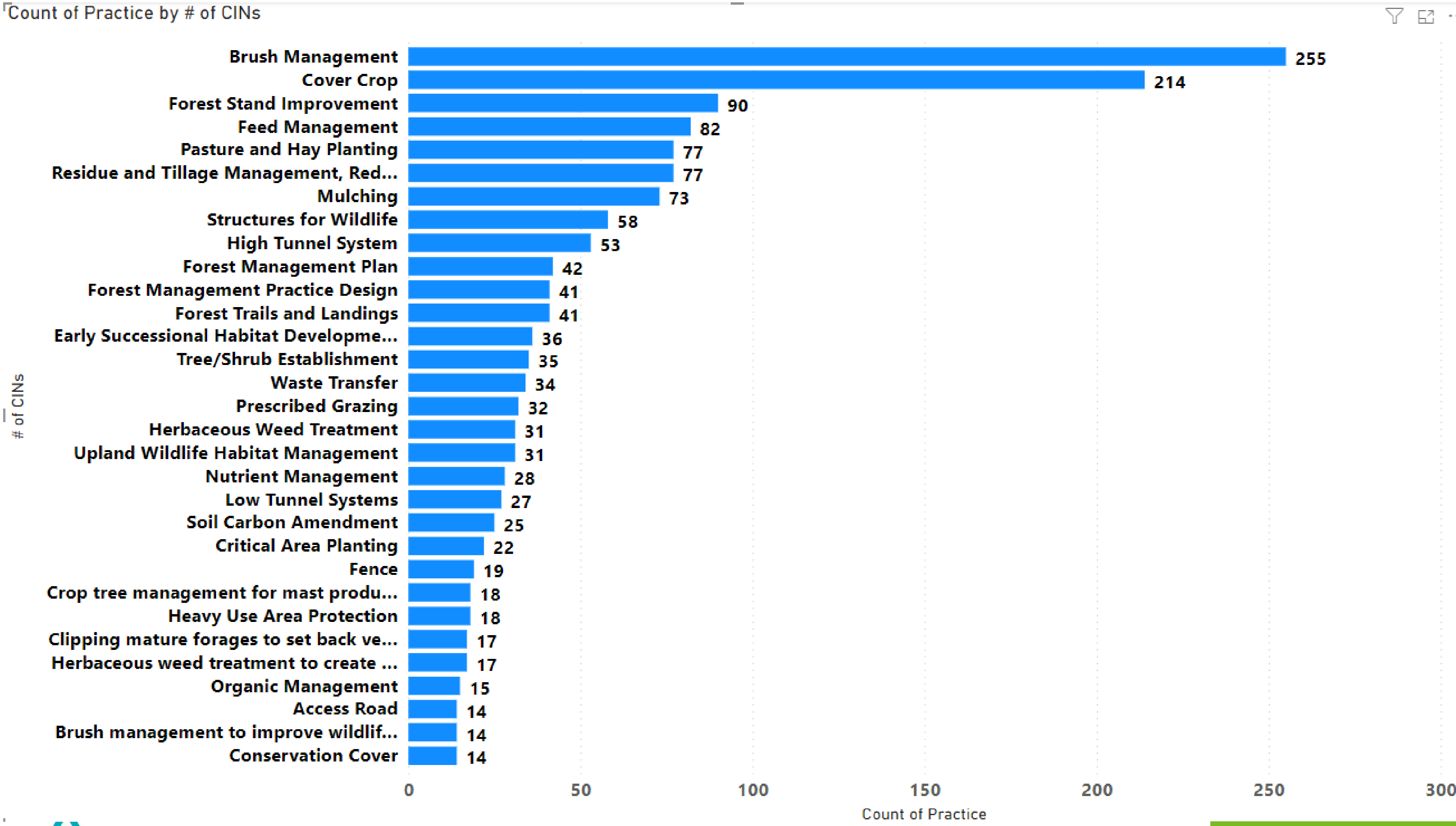
NRCS Programs Update

FY 2023 Obligations



Program	Obligation	# Contracts
ACEP 2018	$2,386,310	13
AMA 2018	$174,091	6
CSP 2018	$1,788,802	78
EQIP 2018	$15,250,541	303
RCPP-EQIP 2014	$107,685	2
RCPP 18	$1,834,791	38
Total	**$21,542,220**	**440**

FY 2023 Top Practices Contracted



FY 2023 Obligations - EQIP

- **$15,250,541 total obligated**
- **303 contracts**
  - $840,722 obligated with IRA funds
  - 2 contracts

  - $14,409,819 obligated with non-IRA funds
  - 301 contracts

EQIP Disaster Assistance

- **Received $4 million from National**
- **Obligated $4,379,882**

Available Practices

Practice Name	Practice Code
Cover Crop	340
Critical Area Planting	342
Fence	382
Pasture and Hay Planting	512
Mulching	484
Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced Till	345
Feed Management	592

EQIP Disaster Assistance Contracts Obligated

Service Center	# of Contracts	Obligation Amount
BERLIN SERVICE CENTER	1	$31,982.00
BRATTLEBORO SERVICE CENTER	1	$103,147.00
MIDDLEBURY SERVICE CENTER	26	$1,346,801.00
MORRISVILLE SERVICE CENTER	1	$57,647.00
NEWPORT SERVICE CENTER	12	$307,770.00
SAINT ALBANS SERVICE CENTER	32	$2,114,274.00
SAINT JOHNSBURY SERVICE CENTER	3	$108,991.00
WHITE RIVER JUNCTION SERVICE CENTER	2	$20,493.00
WILLISTON SERVICE CENTER	10	$288,777.00
Grand Total	**88**	**$4,379,882.00**

Practice	# of CIN's	Obligation Cost	Acres / AU's
340	87	$313,655.00	3868.6 Ac's
345	53	$79,119.00	3228.8 Ac's
512	23	$85,406.00	179.4 Ac's
592	82	$3,901,702.00	82,519 AU's
Totals	**245**	**$4,379,882.00**	**7,276 Acres** **82,519 Animal Units**

FY 2023 Obligations - CSP

- **$1,788,802 total obligated**
- **78 contracts**

  - $460,561 obligated with IRA funds
  - 26 contracts

  - $1,328,241 obligated with non-IRA funds
  - 52 contracts

FY 2023 Obligations - ACEP

ACEP-ALE

- $2,301,500 total obligated
- 12 contracts

ACEP-WRE

- $84,810
- 1 agreement

FY 2023 Obligations - AMA

- $174,091 total obligated
- 6 contracts

FY 2023 Obligations – RCPP-EQIP 2014

- **$107,685 total obligated**
- **2 contracts**

FY 2023 Obligations – RCPP 18

- $1,834,791 total obligated
- 38 contracts

FY 2023 RCPP 18 Summary

Service Center	# of Contracts	Obligation Amount
BERLIN SERVICE CENTER	6	$203,026
MIDDLEBURY SERVICE CENTER	4	$659,008
NEWPORT SERVICE CENTER	3	$172,821
RUTLAND SERVICE CENTER	5	$221,010
SAINT JOHNSBURY SERVICE CENTER	5	$160,637
WHITE RIVER JUNCTION SERVICE CENTER	13	$401,276
WILLISTON SERVICE CENTER	2	$17,013
Grand Total	**38**	**$1,834,791**

Project ID	# of Contracts	Obligation Amount
1865	1	$32,661
2132	33	$1,561,735
2280	2	$169,797
2311	2	$70,598
Grand Total	**38**	**$1,834,791**

Fiscal Year 2024

FY 2024 Advisory Allocations

Program	FA Amount
ACEP-ALE	$2,608,858
ACEP-WRE	$514,860
CSP (Classic and Renewal)	$1,600,000
EQIP General	$7,771,840
EQIP – Golden Wing Warbler Initiative	$263,725
EQIP – National Water Quality Initiative	$681,291
EQIP-IRA	$12,299,000
CSP-IRA	$1,034,000

FY 2024

Program Application Consideration Cutoff Dates

Agricultural Management Assistance Program (AMA)	**October 20, 2023**
Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)	
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)	
Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) *Land Management and Rental*	

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) *Easements*	**February 2, 2024**
Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)	

Hoping to be 100% obligated by June 30, 2024

State Priority Resource Concerns

2024 EQIP State Priority Resource Concerns as follows:

Water Quality:
- Field sediment, nutrient and pathogen loss
- Storage and handling of pollutants

Soil:
- Wind and water erosion
- Concentrated erosion
- Soil quality limitations

Habitat and Forestry:
- Terrestrial habitat
- Degraded plant condition
- Concentrated erosion

State Priority Resource Concerns

2024 CSP State Priority Resource Concerns as follows:

State Priority Resource Concerns:

Agricultural Land Ranking Pools	**Non-Industrial Private Forestland Ranking Pools**
Degraded Plant Condition	Degraded Plant Condition
Pest Pressure	Fire Management
Livestock Production Limitation	Pest Pressure
Field Sediment, Nutrient, and Pesticide Loss	Aquatic Habitat
Soil Quality Limitations	Soil Quality Limitations
Terrestrial Habitat	Terrestrial Habitat
Concentrated Erosion	Concentrated Erosion
Wind and Water Erosion	Wind and Water Erosion

Getting Ready for FY 2025

- **Soils Subcommittee** - November 29, 2023, and May 1, 2024 (1pm-2:30pm)
- **Water Quality Subcommittee** - February 1, 2024, April 11, 2024, and June 6, 2024 (1pm-2:30pm)
- **Climate Subcommittee** - October 13, 2023, November 9, 2023, December 8, 2023, January 12, 2024, February 9,2024, March 8, 2024, April 12, 2024, May 10, 2024, and June 14, 2024 (9am-11am)
- **Urban and Small Agriculture Subcommittee** - January 23, 2024, March 5, 2024 (1pm-2:30pm)
- **Forest and Wildlife Subcommittee** -February 6, 2024, and April 9, 2024 (10am-11:30am)
- **Wetland Reserve Easement Subcommittee** - March 25, 2024 (10:00am-11:30am)
- **Working Lands (EQIP/CSP) Subcommittee** - May 16, 2024 (9:30am-12:00pm)

Getting Ready for FY 2025

Goals of each subcommittee and workgroup:

1) Identify State priority resource concerns
2) Identify State priority conservation practices
3) Identify State priority geographic areas
4) Identify other State priorities
5) Recommend Statewide ranking pools
6) Provide input into the State spending plan
7) Recommend screening/prioritization to manage workload
8) Advise on coordination of technical assistance
9) Document input on delivering financial assistance to best provide equity to all customer

QUESTIONS

United States Department of Agriculture

Conservation Innovation Grants

Joe Buford, State Resource Conservationist
Tom Akin, State Agronomist

Natural Resources Conservation Service

nrcs.usda.gov

Purpose

- Support partners to develop new tools, approaches, practices, and technologies to further natural resource conservation on private lands.
- National level competition
  - Classic CIG
  - On-Farm Trials
- State level competition
- https://cig.sc.egov.usda.gov/

United States Department of Agriculture

FY2023 VT NRCS CIG Funding

- American Farmland Trust, NOFA VT, and UVM -- $200K to develop climate resilience strategies and climate adaptation plans for VT farms;
- American Forest Foundation – $199K to set carbon markets baselines for VT forest operations;
- UVM Extension -- $50K to refine IPM Best Management Practices for high-tunnel farmers;
- VT Audubon Society -- $176K to develop an assessment/ prioritization tool for bird and pollinator habitats.

- Notice of Funding for FY2024 TBD due to Farm Bill expiration.

USDA United States Department of Agriculture

VT NRCS CIG Spotlight—FY2022

Awardee:
Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Project Title:
Linking Farm Phosphorus Reduction Planner (FarmPREP) to Agricultural Soil Health and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Modeling in Vermont

Purpose:
Is to provide agricultural soil health, and agricultural greenhouse gas tracking, quantification, verification, and reporting for the State of Vermont utilizing the Farm Phosphorus Reduction Planner (Farm-PREP).

Award Amount:
$487,000

USDA NRCS Conservation Innovation Grants: Vermont State Program

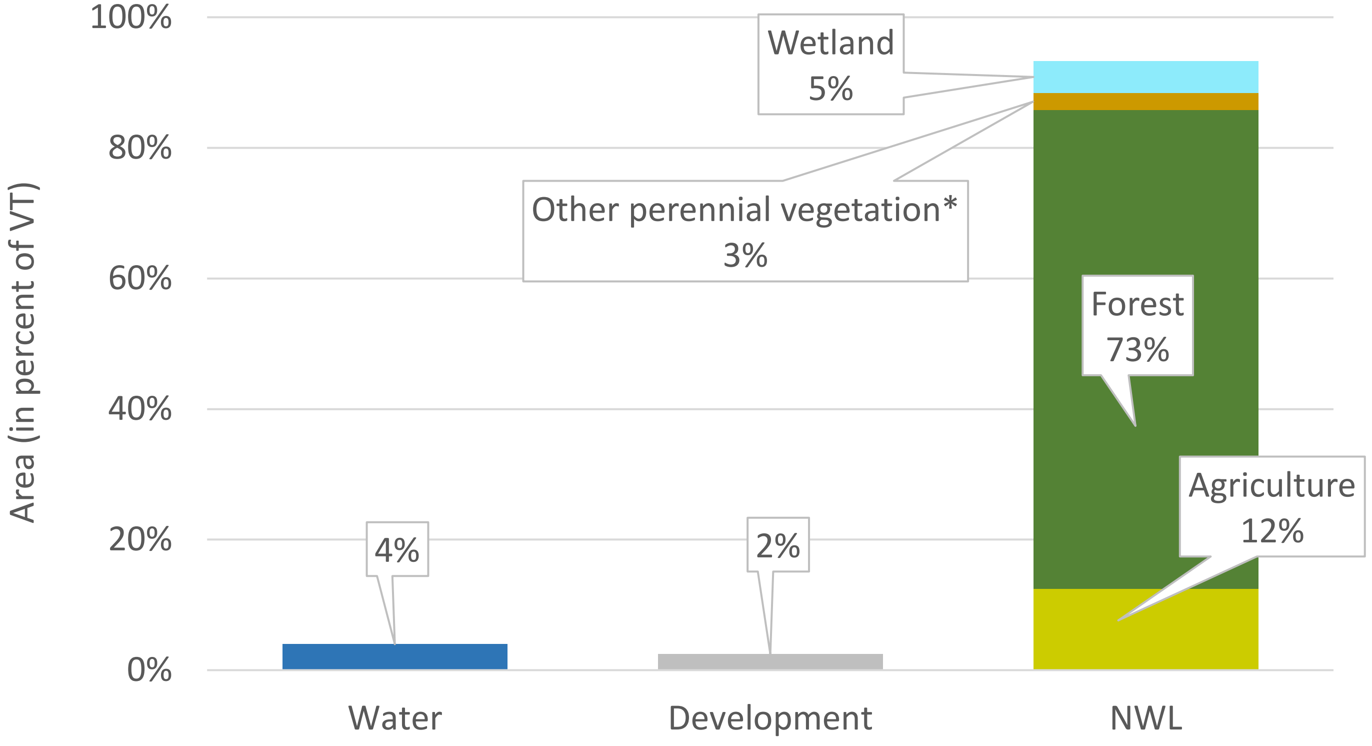
A State Government Perspective

Ryan Patch
Agriculture Climate and Land Use Policy Manager
Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets
Presentation to: USDA NRCS-VT State Technical Committee
October 17, 2023

VERMONT
AGENCY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & MARKETS

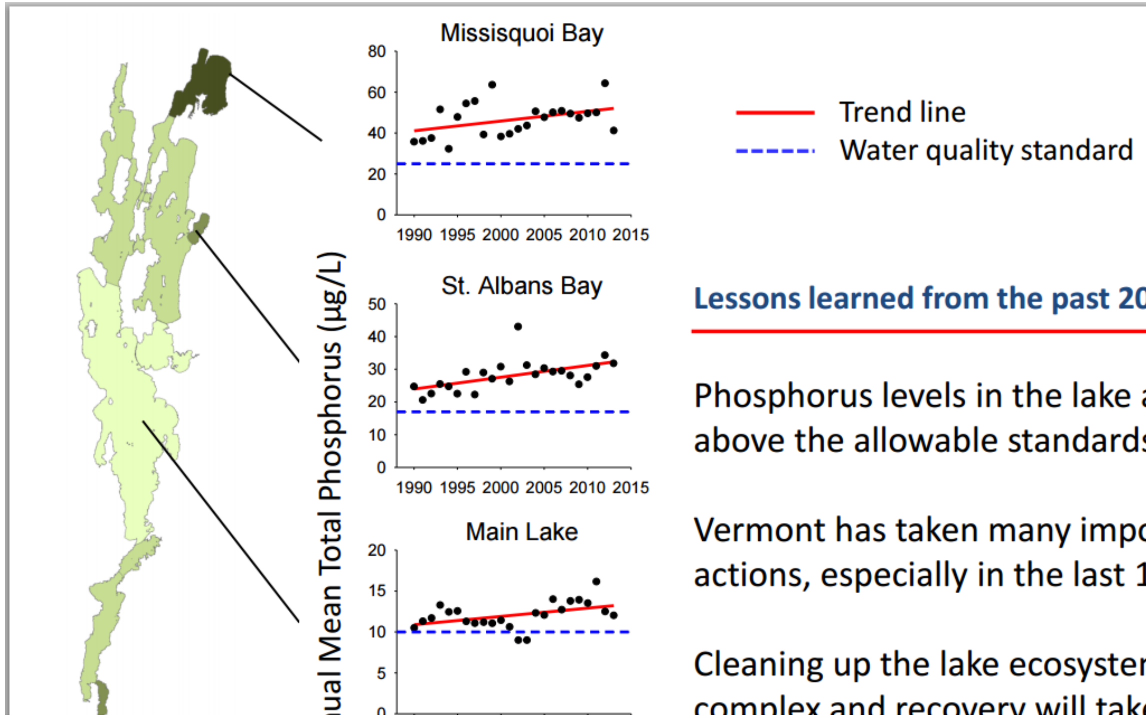
VERMONT
AGENCY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & MARKETS

Natural & Working Lands (NWL) cover 94% of Vermont



*Other perennial vegetation includes grasslands, shrub/scrublands, and turf

Data source: 2016 National Land Cover Database; Images courtesy FPR

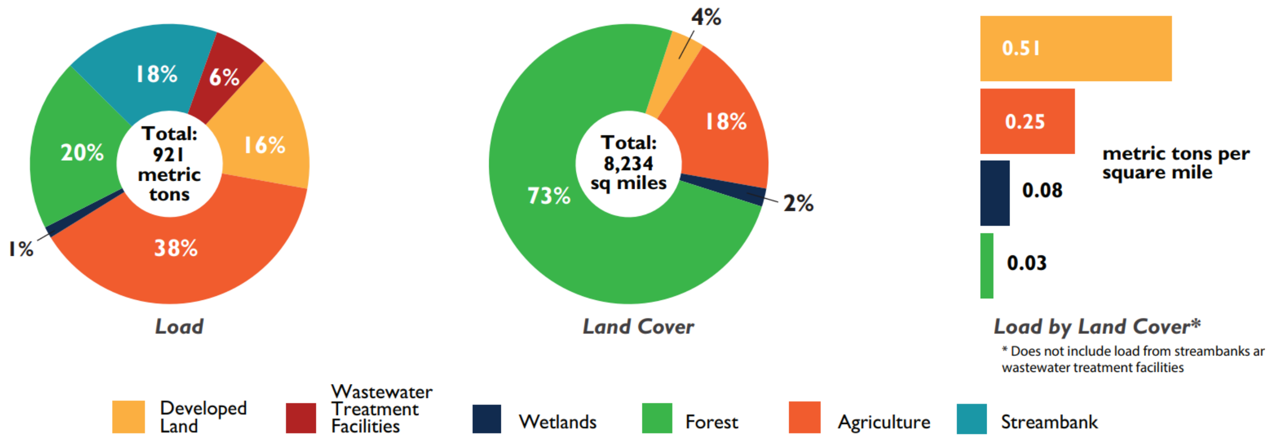


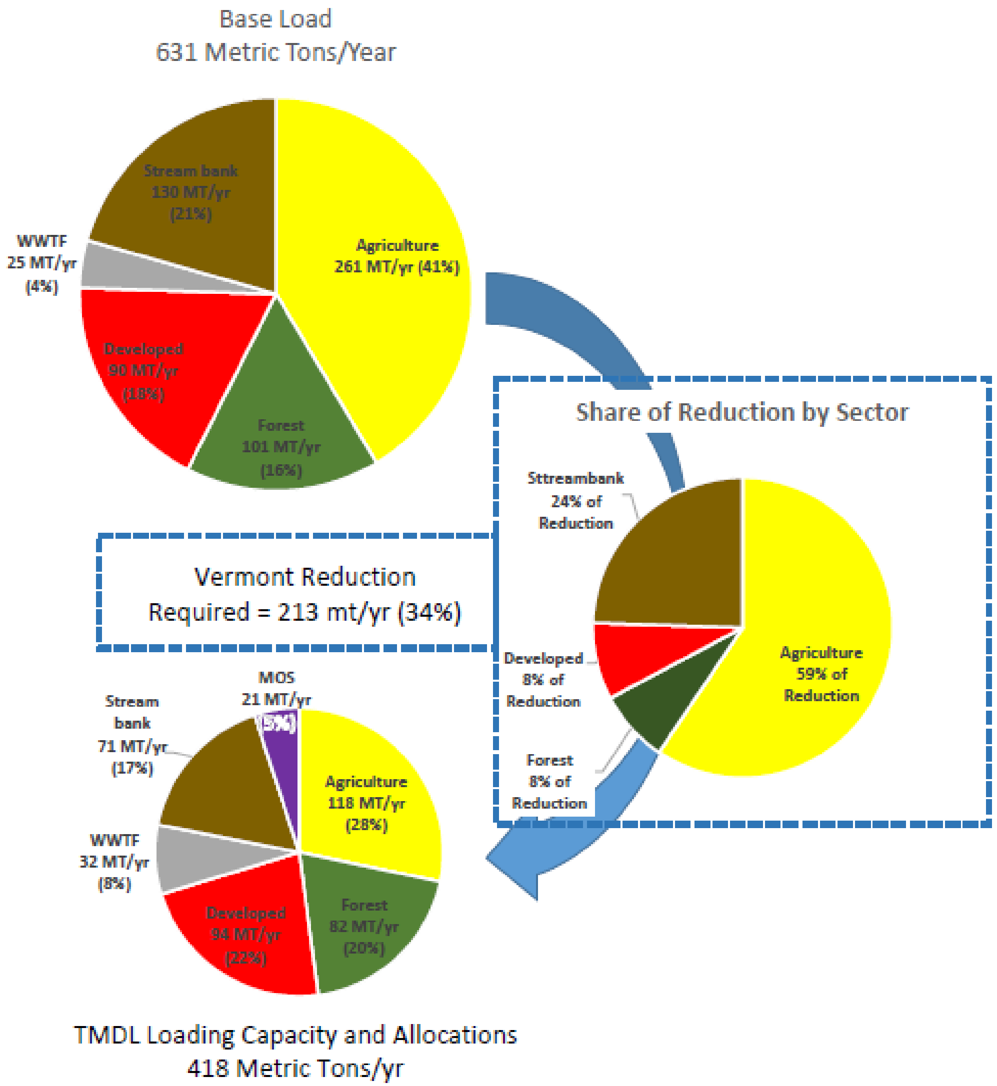
Lessons learned from the past 20 years

Phosphorus levels in the lake are above the allowable standards.

Vermont has taken many important actions, especially in the last 10 years.

Cleaning up the lake ecosystem is complex and recovery will take time





DATA SOURCES: Long Term Monitoring Program (LCBP, VT ANR, NYSDEC)

Science informed policy

VERMONT
AGENCY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & MARKETS

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 1
5 POST OFFICE SQUARE, SUITE 100
BOSTON, MA 02109-3912

January 24, 2011

Secretary Deborah Markowitz
Agency of Natural Resources
Center Building
103 South Main Street
Waterbury, VT 05671-0301

Re: Lake Champlain Phosphorus TMDL Disapproval

Dear Secretary Markowitz:

FINAL REPORT OF THE
Agricultural Working Group

A PARTNERSHIP OF
VT Agency of Agriculture,
VT Dept of Environmental Conservation,
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
and the Agricultural Community.

Facilitated by The Environmental Mediation Center (EMC)
and the Consensus Building Institute (CBI)

Source: https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2015-09/documents/2002-lake-champlain-tmdl-disapproval-decision.pdf
Source: https://emcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Final-Report-of-the-AWG.pdf

Science informed policy

VERMONT
AGENCY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & MARKETS

AGRICULTURAL PRACTICE MONITORING AND EVALUATION

FINAL REPORT

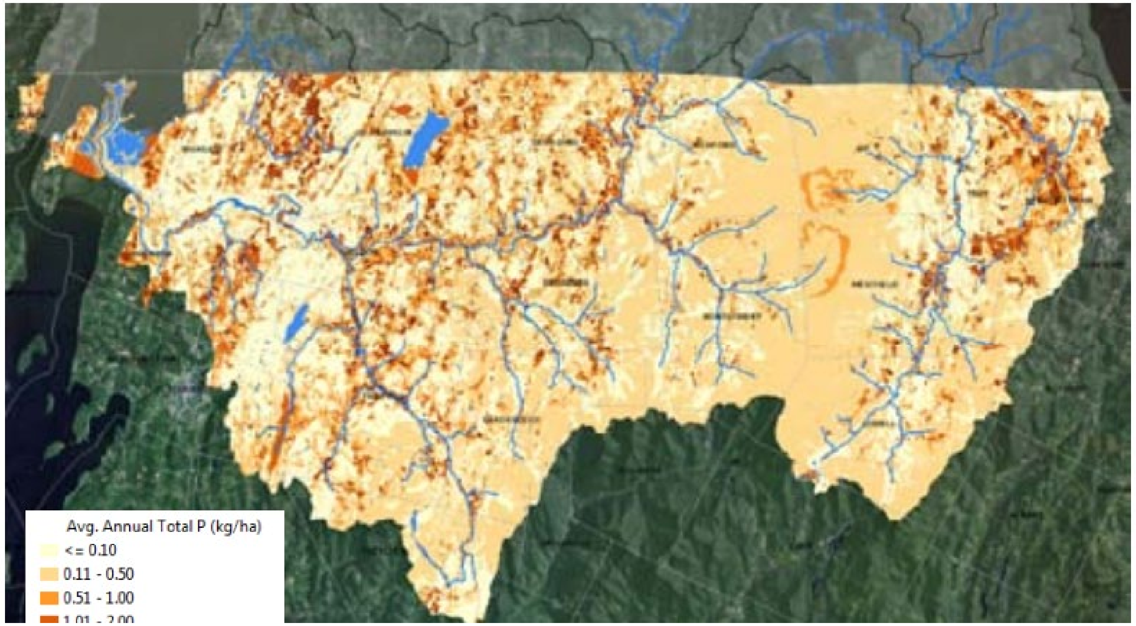
Stone Project ID 112540-W
July 31, 2015

Monitoring station at the inlet of the water and sediment control basin (WAS1) during a December 2014 rain-on-snow event

IDENTIFICATION OF CRITICAL SOURCE AREAS OF PHOSPHORUS WITHIN THE VERMONT SECTOR OF THE MISSISQUOI BAY BASIN

FINAL REPORT

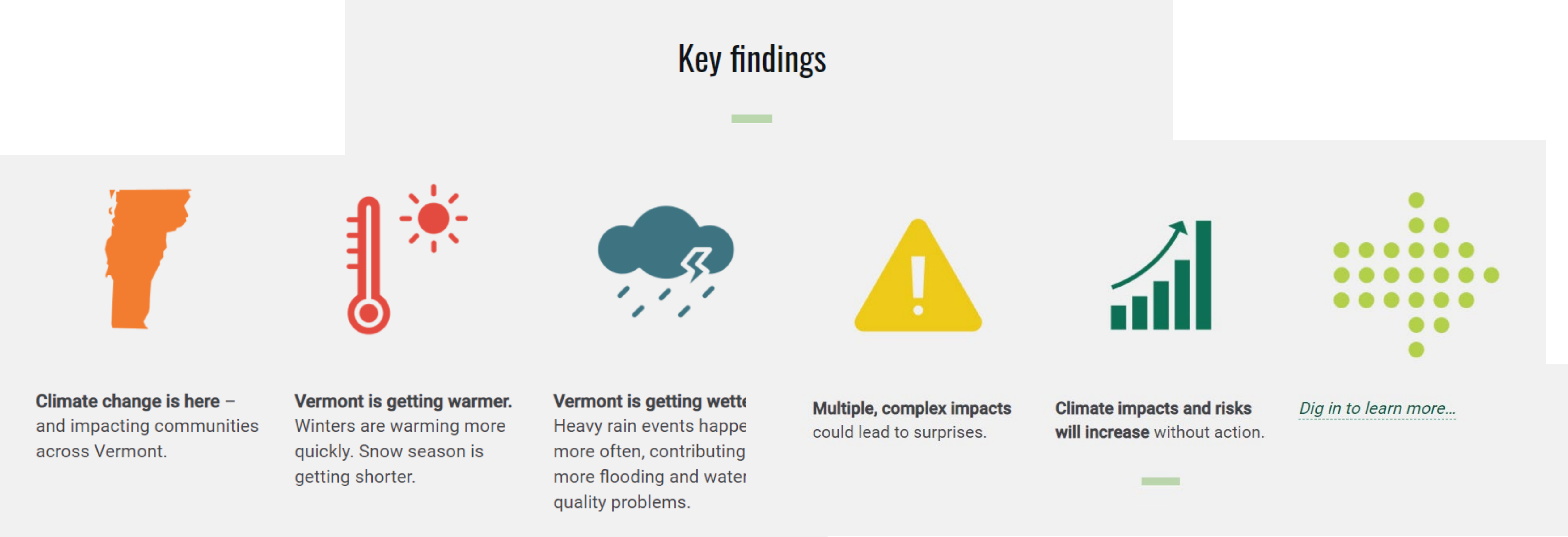
Stone Project ID 092156-G
December 15, 2011



Source: https://agriculture.vermont.gov/sites/agriculture/files/documents/Water_Quality/AAFM%20AGO%20Study%20Report_final_DRAFT.pdf
Source: https://lcbp-089519.s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/techreportPDF/63B_Missisquoi_CSA.pdf

Vermont is Getting Warmer and Wetter: Climate Change Study

The Green Mountain State has warmed nearly 2°F, with a 21% jump in precipitation



Source: The Vermont Climate Assessment 2021. Burlington, Vermont: Gund Institute for Environment at the University of Vermont. On the web: https://vtclimate.org

Global Warming Solutions Act

* * * Greenhouse Gas Reduction Requirements * * *

Sec. 3. 10 V.S.A. § 578 is amended to read:

§ 578. GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION ~~GOALS~~ REQUIREMENTS

(a) ~~General goal of greenhouse~~ Greenhouse gas reduction requirements. ~~It is the goal of the State to~~ Vermont shall reduce emissions of greenhouse gases from within the geographical boundaries of the State and those emissions outside the boundaries of the State that are caused by the use of energy in

VT LEG #350685 v.1

No. 153
2020

Page 4 of 25

Vermont ~~in order to make an appropriate contribution to achieving the regional goals of reducing emissions of greenhouse gases from the 1990 baseline~~, as measured and inventoried pursuant to section 582 of this title, by:

(1) ~~25~~ not less than 26 percent from 2005 greenhouse gas emissions by January 1, ~~2012~~ 2025 pursuant to the State's membership in the United States Climate Alliance and commitment to implement policies to achieve the objectives of the 2016 Paris Agreement;

(2) ~~50~~ not less than 40 percent from 1990 greenhouse gas emissions by January 1, ~~2028~~ 2030 pursuant to the State's 2016 Comprehensive Energy Plan; and

(3) ~~if practicable using reasonable efforts, 75~~ not less than 80 percent from 1990 greenhouse gas emissions by January 1, 2050 pursuant to the State's 2016 Comprehensive Energy Plan.

* * *

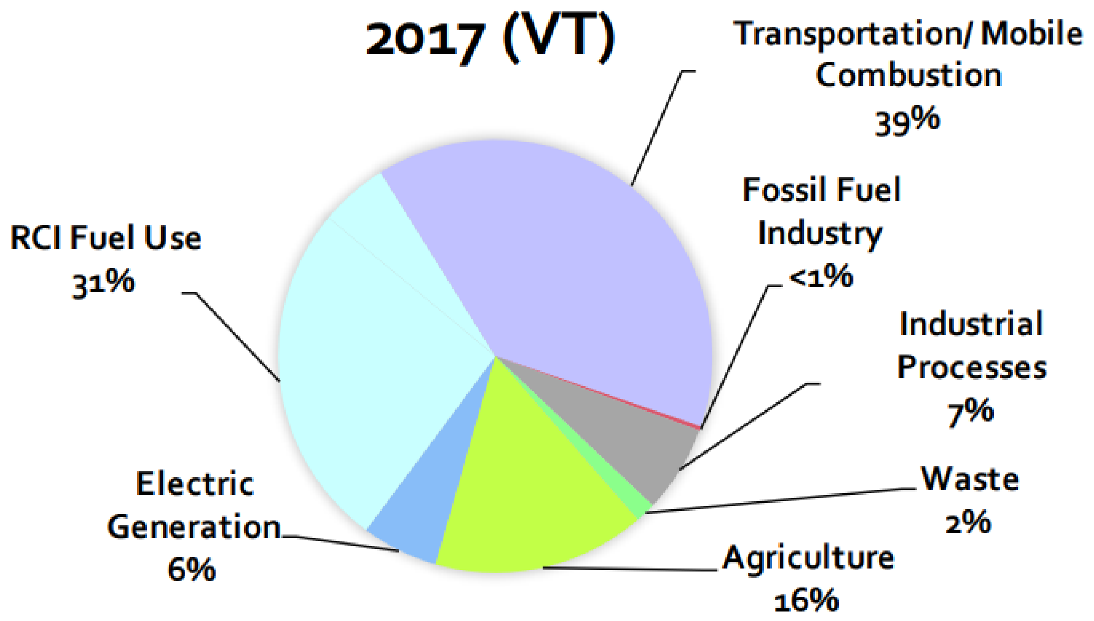


Figure 4: Vermont GHG percent contributions by sector.

Agriculture emits and sequesters from the same unit of land

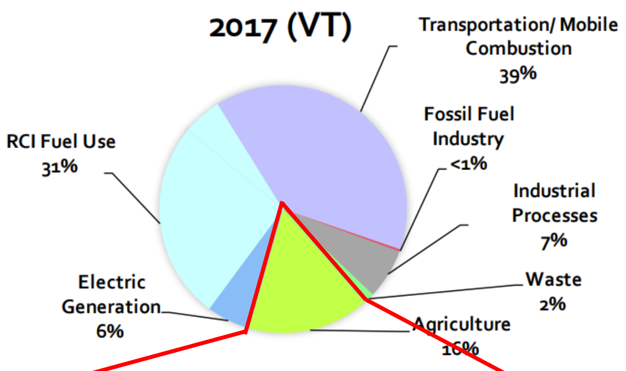
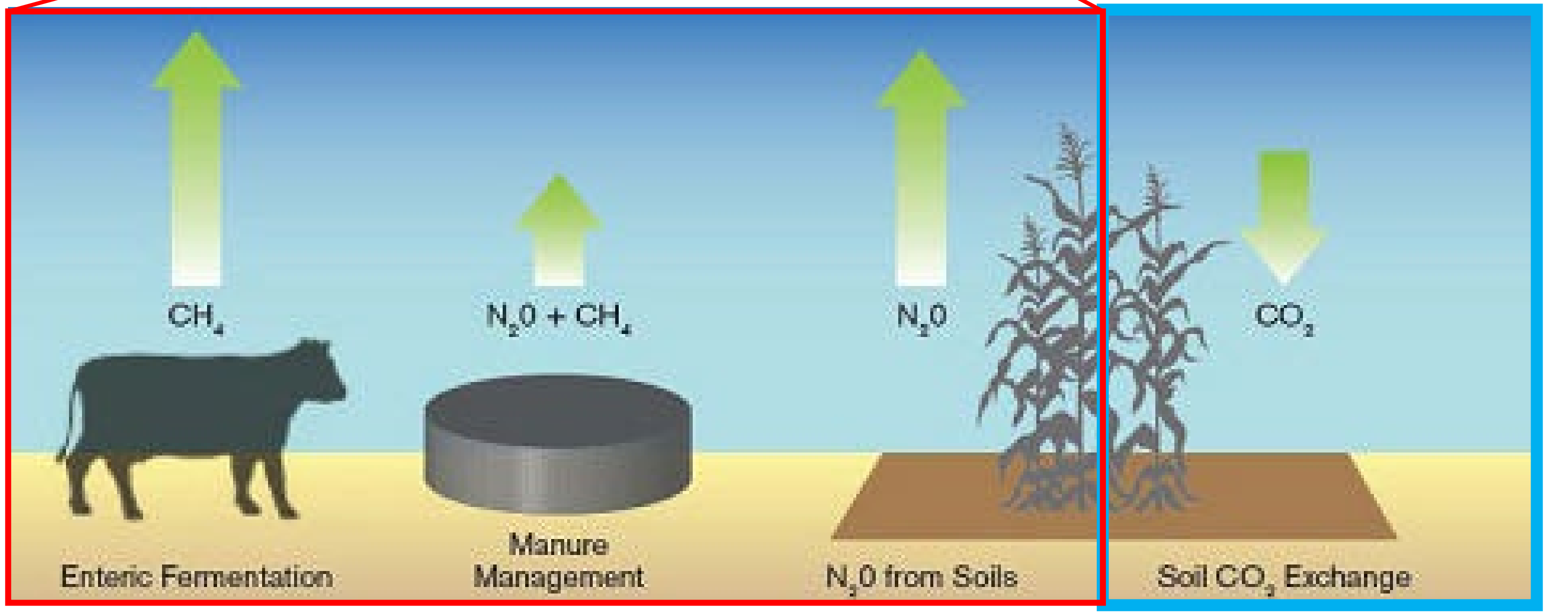


Figure 4: Vermont GHG percent contributions by sector.

GHG Emissions & Sequestration



Source: https://www.agr.gc.ca/eng/agriculture-and-the-environment/agricultural-practices/climate-change-and-agriculture/greenhouse-gases-and-agriculture/?id=1329321969842
Source: https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/aqc/climate-change/documents/_Vermont_Greenhouse_Gas_Emissions_Inventory_Update_1990-2017_Final.pdf

VERMONT
AGENCY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & MARKETS


Conservation Innovation Grants Vermont State Program

Fiscal Year (FY) 2022
Conservation Innovation Grants State Program
Notice of Funding Opportunity (NFO)

No. USDA-NRCS-VT-CIG-22-NOFO0001133
Date Issued: FEBRUARY 8, 2022

USDA United States Department of Agriculture

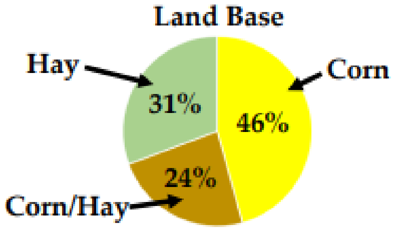
VPFP Vermont Pay For Phosphorus Program

Farm Case Studies

The examples below are based on Vermont farms that provided their data from the 2021 crop season to support our research. Each example illustrates how unique farms implementing various field management practices may perform in the VPFP program and the annual phosphorus reduction payments they may be eligible for if they enroll.

Farm #1

This dairy farm manages 430 acres with fields primarily located on poorly drained silt loams in corn, hay, and corn/hay rotations.



Field Management

- Nutrient Management Planning
- Extended crop rotations
- No-till on annual crops
- Cover crops
- Surface applied manure

Meets 40% Threshold

+20% Reduction

Current Farm P Loss

60% P Reduction

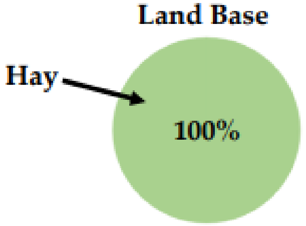
172 lbs. P above threshold = $17,200 P Payment

Payments

Data Entry	$4,000
P Reduction	$17,200
Total (Year 1)	**$21,200**

Farm #2

This dairy farm manages 180 acres with fields primarily located on poorly drained silt loams all in permanent hay and pasture.



Field Management

- Nutrient Management Planning
- Crop to hay seed downs
- Surface applied manure

Meets 40% Threshold

+27% Reduction

Current Farm P Loss

67% P Reduction

145 lbs. P above threshold = $14,500 P Payment

Payments

Data Entry	$2,700
P Reduction	$14,500
Total (Year 1)	**$17,200**

CIG Priorities for FY 2022:

b) Soil Health Priority

The objective of this priority is to implement new technologies, methods or market-based approaches to maintain, restore, or enhance soil resources associated with agricultural and/or forest land uses while sustaining productivity.

Possible subtopics include:

- Economic/Financial case studies on successful Soil Health Management Systems (SHMS) across varied production systems that include quantifying on-site net profit and offsite impacts (e.g., soil erosion, nutrient losses, water and air quality).
- Develop, demonstrate, inform, and promote design and implementation of SHMSs that are location- and production system-appropriate, economically viable, and improve soil health/soil functioning (e.g., optimize nutrient availability, optimize productivity, control soil-borne diseases, increase plant available water, increase resilience to extreme weather), including:
  - Implementation strategies for feasible transition from degraded soils in varied production systems.
  - Transitions to more diverse cropping rotations and grazing systems.
  - Optimal species mixes, seeding rates and seeding methods (e.g., inter-seeding, inter-cropping, frost-seeding) to enhance cover crop establishment/survival, as

well as management and termination. Innovative approaches to incorporating cover crops in high intensity/high value cropping systems that address concerns such as delayed planting, pest issues, residue challenges and nitrogen availability challenges.
- Demonstrate and quantify the impacts of Soil Health Management Systems on pest prevention, avoidance and suppression;
- Demonstrate innovative ways to control pests that facilitate the implementation of Soil Health Management Systems.
- Quantify the impact and value of soil health by different types of agricultural operations across a range of soils, including use of standard methods for physical, biological, and chemical soil properties/soil health indicators.

c) Urban Agriculture and Climate Smart Agriculture

The objective of this priority is to identify and implement new technologies, methods or market-based approaches for urban agriculture and climate smart agriculture while sustaining environmentally sound conservation practices.

Possible subtopics include:

- **Innovative conservation approaches and technologies to build and encourage climate adaptation and resilience of Vermont communities and natural systems.**
- **Develop and implement a new approach for healthy soils and carbon sequestration.**
- **Leverage, expand, and adapt innovation approaches to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Vermont.**
- **Quantify the impact of increased agronomic and grazing practice adoption to increase soil carbon sequestration.**
- **Develop, demonstrate, inform, and promote urban agriculture and small farm technologies to achieve identified conservation outcomes.**

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1) How to submit an application

Applications must be submitted electronically through grants.gov (see Section D.2.). Submissions must be received by the time and date due. Late submissions will not be reviewed or considered. The agency will rely on system generated date and time receipt documentation for submission made.

2) Information for New Users of Grants.gov

a. Overview
While a Grants.gov account is not required to download an NFO and related documents, it is required to submit an application. If your organization has never submitted an application via Grants.gov, please be aware that there are several steps you must take to register your organization before you can submit an application. **Completing those steps can take a significant amount of time, plan accordingly.**

For information about the Grants.gov pre-award phase of the grant lifecycle see https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/learn-grants/grants-101/pre-award-phase.html.

b. Register to Apply through Grants.gov
Carefully review the registration steps and gather information requested prior to beginning the registration process to avoid last-minute searches for required information. For assistance with the registration process, contact Grants.gov Applicant Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov.

APPENDIX A
APPLICATION PACKAGE CHECKLIST

Important: Proposals Missing Any of These Required Items Will Not Be Considered

PROPOSAL

☐ 1. **Project Abstract:** (one page maximum)

☐ 2. **Project Narrative:** (16 pages maximum)

a. Cover Page (Mandatory. 1-page maximum included in 16-page limit for narrative.)

i. Applicant entity name
ii. Project title
iii. Proposed Start/End Data and duration of project in months
iv. Amount of Federal funding requested
v. Amount of non-Federal cost-share/match funding committed
vi. Project contacts: One technical and one administrative
vii. Geographic location of the project
viii. State priority being addressed
ix. Declaration of historically underserved (if applicable)
x. Statement of innovation

a. Project background

b. Project goals/objectives

c. Project design and methods

d. Project outcomes and benefits

e. Geographic location and size of project area (include a map if possible)

f. EQIP-eligible producer participation

g. Project deliverables/products

h. Project action plan and timeline

i. Project management

j. Project transferability (technology transfer)

k. Project evaluation

☐ **3. References/citations (if applicable)**

☐ **4. Team Qualifications**

☐ **5. Assessment of Environmental Impacts**

☐ **5. Declaration of Previous CIG Awards (if applicable)**

☐ **6. Declaration of Historically Underserved (if applicable)**

BUDGET INFORMATION

☐ **7. Standard Form (SF) 424,** "Application for Federal Assistance"

☐ **8. Completed SF-424A, "Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs"**

☐ **9. Detailed Budget Narrative with Table (see example in Appendix B); Maximum 12 pages**

☐ **10. Indirect Costs:** Submit documentation of a federally approved indirect cost rate (NICRA), a previous de minimis rate agreement, or a request to establish a de minimis rate agreement (section IV(B)(9)).

☐ **11. Letters of Commitment for Project Match (see template in Appendix C):** (required for projects with matching funds coming from a third party). Submit signed commitment letters of matching support from each non-Federal third party providing matching funds. Include both cash and in-kind commitments.

OTHER

☐ **12. Certification Regarding Lobbying**

☐ **13. Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement: (if applicable)**

☐ **14. Letters of Support: (optional)**

This project would incorporate seven discrete areas of work:

Task 1: Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emission Model Comparison
Task 2: Add Carbon emissions to Farm-PREP
Task 3: Model Evaluation / Calibration / Parameterization of Carbon Storage for Pasture
Task 4: Add Aggregate Stability as a Measure of Soil Health
Task 5: USDA Agricultural Policy/Environmental eXtender (APEX) Calibration for Nitrogen
Task 6: Add other Natural and Working Land Uses to Farm-PREP
Task 7: Recruit Farms, Enter Farm Data, Analyze and Evaluate Data against Climate, Pasture, Nitrogen, and 'whole-farm' Parameters calibrated in Objectives #1 - #6 of this Proposal

State Priority Being Addressed: Soil Health Priority; Climate Smart Agriculture

Competition for 10% set-aside: No

Technical Contact:
Judson Peck, AWQ Program Analyst
Judson.Peck@vermont.gov | (802) 522-7041

Administrative Contact:
Ryan Patch, Ag Climate Policy Manager
Ryan.Patch@vermont.gov | (802)-272-0323

VERMONT
AGENCY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & MARKETS

CIG Research Initiative Call for Participants

Call for Participants - Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) research initiative 'Linking Farm Phosphorus Reduction Planner (FarmPREP) to Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets, Water Quality Division seeks 10-12 farm operations willing to participate in a Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) research initiative 'Linking Farm Phosphorus Reduction Planner (FarmPREP) to Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)' funded by the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (UDSA NRCS).

This CIG research initiative will lay the groundwork for a new program, the Vermont Pay-for-Phosphorus (VPFP) Program. Pay-For-Phosphorus is an innovative pay-for-performance approach that pays farmers for the pounds of phosphorus reduced by implementing conservation practices, as opposed to paying farmers a portion of the cost to install a practice. In 2016, the Environmental Protection Agency reestablished a Phosphorus TMDL for the Lake Champlain Basin (LCB), which includes specific reductions on agricultural land ranging from 20.0% to 82.8% per lake segment. The novel pay-for-performance VPFP program will pay farmers for phosphorus reductions beyond the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Base Load. AAFM anticipates providing the first phosphorus payments under the VPFP Program based on the 2022 growing season. You can learn more at agriculture.vermont.gov/VPFP.

AAFM is seeking 10-12 farms statewide who are willing to participate in our CIG research initiative, which will be critical in the development of the VPFP Program. Interested participants must manage at least 15 acres of hay or cropland and be interested in providing input for the development of the VPFP Program.

The expectations for interested participants include:

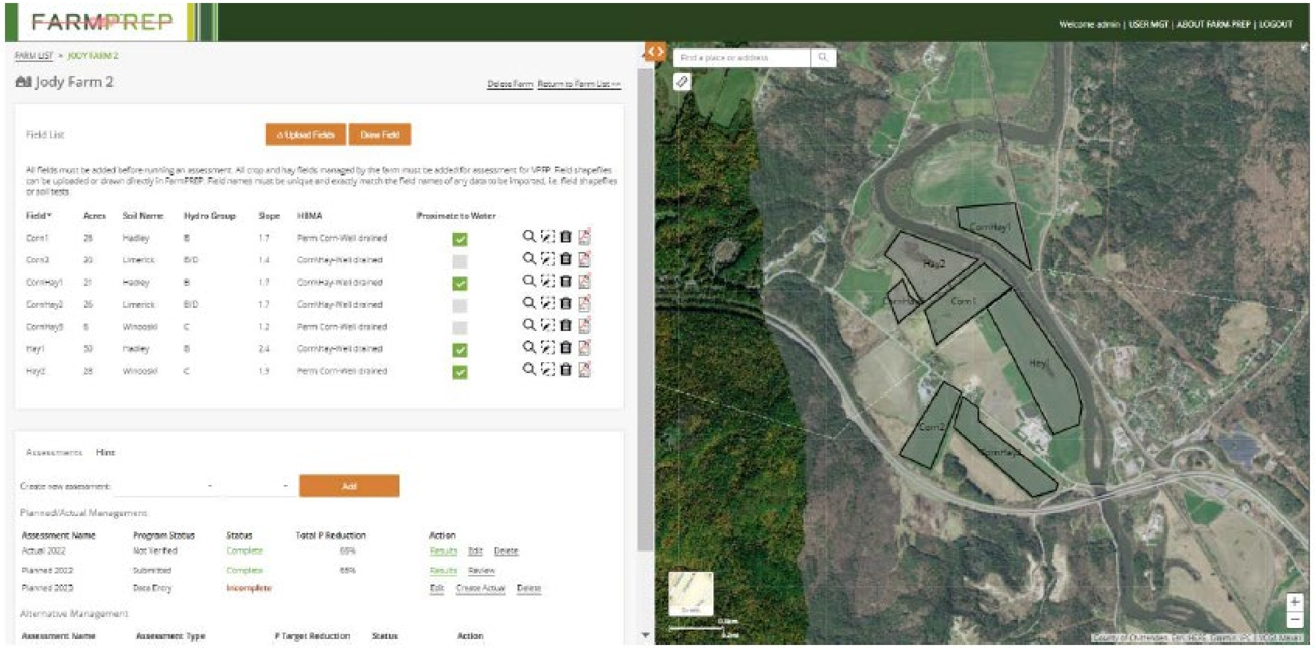
- Collaborate with AAFM non-regulatory staff over the course of the year from March to December of 2021
- Provide AAFM with the following information:
    1. up to date plan for crops and nutrient application for all fields for entire farm operation for the 2021 calendar year and farm maps to correspond with these fields
    2. up to date soil tests (within 3 years) for all fields, and manure tests for all manure sources
    3. an update about any changes from your initial plan mid summer (July) and end of year (December)
- Attend a seminar to gather final input and review results of data analysis
- Complete surveys about your experience participating in this research initiative
- *Optional* - Allow AAFM staff to trial a field check protocol for your farm
- *Optional* - Attend, present and/or serve on a stakeholder advisory panel for VFPF Program (Please note that this is not guaranteed based on CIG participation)

Source: https://agriculture.vermont.gov/participate-in-CIG

VERMONT
AGENCY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & MARKETS

Statement of Work – Request for Proposal: VAAFM Farm-PREP Modifications
Technical Response

STONE ENVIRONMENTAL

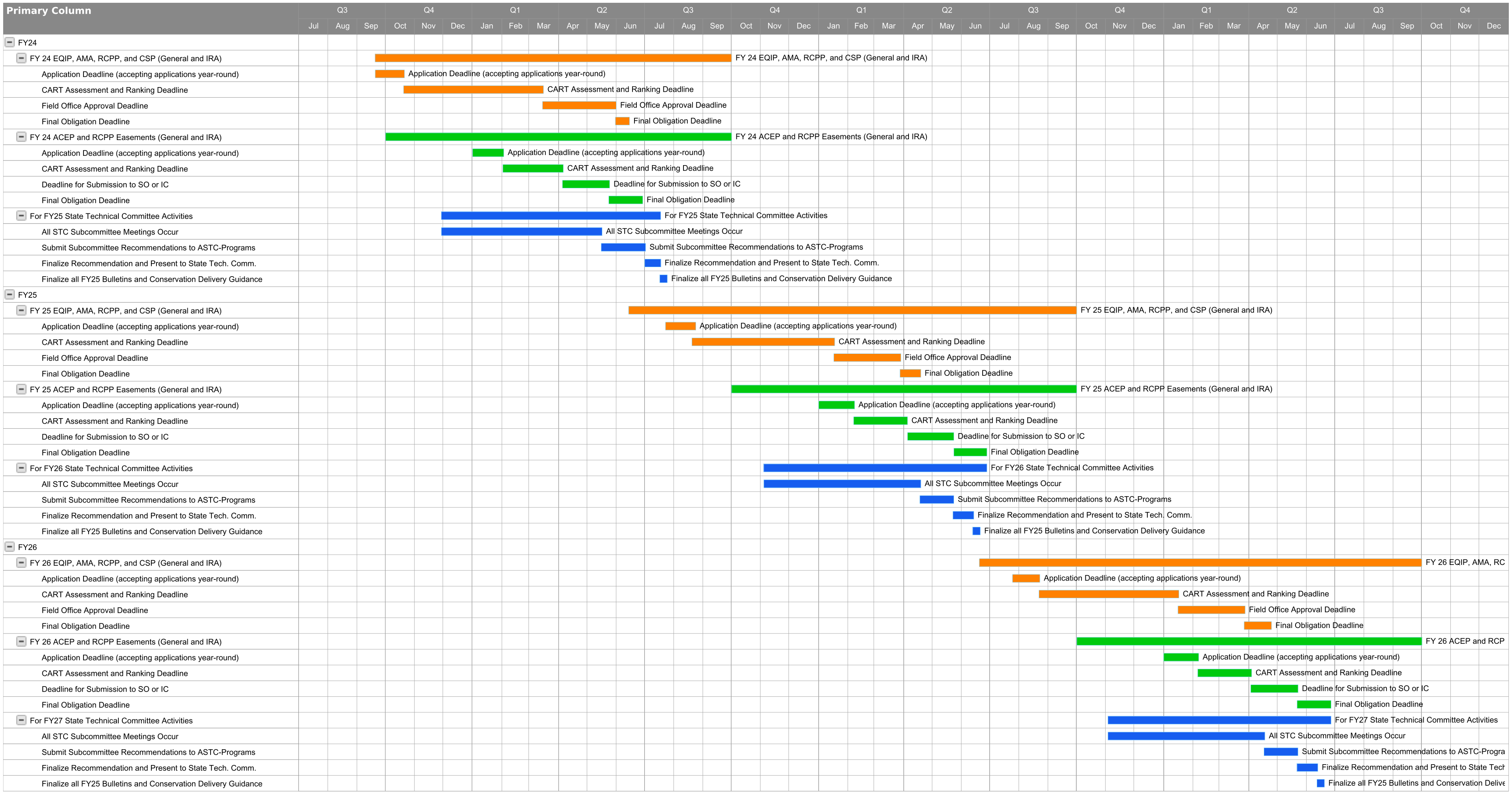


Source: https://agriculture.vermont.gov/participate-in-CIG

Contact

Ryan Patch
VAAFM
Ryan.Patch@vermont.gov
802-272-0323

Vermont NRCS FY Conservation Delivery Plan - Draft



Vermont State Technical Committee
FY 2024 Dates

October 18, 2023

January 17, 2024

April 17, 2024

July 17, 2024

Field Tour planned for Fall 2024