



Iowa Bulletin: 440-26-2

Date: February 25, 2026

Subject: PGM – Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) and Land Management and Rental (LMR) Classic Projects.

Action Required By: September 5, 2026

Purpose: To provide guidance for administering Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Land Management and Rental (LMR) Classic projects.

Expiration Date: September 30, 2026

Background: RCPP projects fall under two categories: RCPP Classic and RCPP Alternative Funding Arrangements (AFA). This bulletin addresses only RCPP LMR Classic Producer Projects (non-easement) (Commonly referred to as RCPP-Classic).

Under RCPP - Classic, NRCS enters into Land Management and/or Rental contracts directly with producers to address resource concerns on their land. RCPP Programmatic Partnership Agreement (PPA) outlines the goals and objectives of each project, including resource concerns to be addressed, eligible land uses, and identified practices.

Explanation: This bulletin provides Iowa program guidance and eligibility requirements for RCPP LMR Classic. In addition to this bulletin, planners must also follow guidance provided in National Instruction (NI) 300-315, "Regional Conservation Partnership Program Manual Contract Obligation and Management" Subpart A and continue to follow policy in Title 440, Conservation Programs Manual (CPM), Part 530, "Working Lands Conservation Programs Manual" and Part 531 "Regional Conservation Partnership Program" as applicable.

RCPP classic projects build upon traditional covered program authorities Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP). Under RCPP Classic projects, NRCS directly manages all RCPP financial assistance (FA) awards to producers (through the ranking process), utilizing partner involvement through partner contributions or partner-provided technical assistance (TA).

Land Management - Conservation practices or activities include land improvement, management, restoration, or land treatment activities. RCPP Classic projects utilize Iowa Practice Scenario Booklet, see attachment A of this bulletin for practices eligible within each project.

Land Rental - NRCS will offer land rental payments through rental activity if authorized through the PPA. If a participant is eligible for a rental payment this will be included in the estimated cost for the application. Rental payments will be added to the PreApproval when scheduling agreement items (Practice Code: RFRN); 440-CPM-530-S-530.520A, "Rental Activity Worksheet" must be completed and signed by conservation planner every year when certifying practice completion prior to payment.

Program Implementation: NRCS manages LMR contracts using Conservation Desktop Applications and Agreements (CDAA). RCPP is the first program to use this method for processing an application into a contract.

Program Support Materials: located on Iowa SharePoint. Training events have been recorded for bulk obligation process, payments, and modifications.

All PreApprovals are required to be obligated by the last business day in August. Unlike EQIP and CSP, RCPP requires a bulk obligation process. Obligation package must be submitted to Des Moines State Office within 5 business days of obligation in Conservation Desktop.

All FY 2026 Conservation Program Deadlines will be posted on the Iowa programs calendar in Outlook.

Table 1: RCPP LMR projects and ranking pools FY 2026

Projects ID	Project Name	Funds Available FY26	Ranking Pool Name
1894	Turkey River Watershed Partnership	Mods Only	N/A
2696	Innovative Conservation Agriculture (Allamakee/Clayton)	Mods Only	N/A
1896	Iowa Systems Approach to Conservation Drainage	Mods Only	N/A
1976	North Raccoon Partnership for Soil and Water	Mods Only	N/A
2266	Midwest Ag Water Quality Partnership	Mods Only	N/A
2374	Cedar River Source Water Partnership	Yes	2374 LM Producer FY26
2448	SE Iowa Watershed Partnership	Yes	2448 LM Producer FY26
2570	Floyd River Water Quality Partnership	Yes	2570 LM Producer FY26
2857	West Nishnabotna Water Quality and Infrastructure Partnership	Yes	2857 LM Producer FY26
2881	Driftless for Wild & Rare Phase 3 (LMR)	Yes	2881 LMR Producer FY26
2963	Protect Rathbun Lake (LMR)	Yes	2963 LMR Producer FY26

RCPP Application Requirements: All applications will be entered into CD under the appropriate sign-up based on the date the applicant signed the program application. Only one signed RCPP application (NRCS-CPA-1200) is required, showing the applicant signed up by the cutoff date. However, each individual RCPP project application does require a separate application number in CDAA (utilize the same practice schedule for each participant, even if ranked in multiple ranking pools, with multiple application numbers, across multiple programs). The current version of NRCS-CPA-1200 is dated December 2025, NRCS is still accepting applications that were signed using the 2024 version.

There is one cost list being utilized for all RCPP Projects in FY 2026. The cost list information is the same for RCPP and EQIP.

Eligibility: Field Offices must verify all RCPP LMR producer contract participants comply with the producer, land, and program eligibility requirements in 440-CPM-530-C, "Application for Assistance" and 530.502 "RCPP Eligibility".

Preapprovals: RCPP PreApprovals will be selected prior to EQIP PreApprovals. It is imperative conservation planners follow state guidance on practice schedule creation for applications that are ranked in multiple fund pools, across multiple programs. PreApproved applications will display as full or partial funding, depending on practices. Practices not selected may be eligible for funding in other ranking pools. **Note:** No RCPP PreApprovals will be unselected in SAT until all PreApprovals are sent out Statewide for EQIP.

ACT NOW selections will be made daily for eligible ACT NOW project categories when funds are available. Area Program Specialist (APS) or RCPP-RC Specialist will send an email to RCPP Program Specialist when applications have been ranked and submitted with application number, ranking pool, and category to be selected for ACT NOW. Ranked applications will be PreApproved in the order they are submitted into CART (not necessarily ranking order), as per 440-CPM-530.37 updated language.

Ranking Pools with applicable ACT NOW Categories will be labeled as ACT NOW at the category level in Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool (CART). ACT NOW will be available as soon as the ranking pool is active in CART until funds are exhausted. Please use this Bulletin, project rankings documents, and CART/SAT to view which categories within a project have applicable ACT NOW process. Ranking thresholds will be set and sent out statewide as applicable.

Any changes in cost estimates above normal rounding must be approved by RCPP Program Manager, before adding funds to PreApproval. RCPP projects operate on a fixed budget. Lead Partners for each project make selections based on projected allocation for the fiscal year based on annual project outcomes.

Contract Development Requirements

Conservation Planners must manually record the following information in the CDAA module as appropriate:

- Participant self-certification of historically underserved status.
- Payment shares, if applicable.

Before contracts or agreements may be executed, obligated, or transferred; and prior to payments being approved, persons and legal entities that are applicants or participants must have a Form CCC-902 in determined status (NI 440-324). CD uses subsidiary data from the Farm Service Agency to automatically check client eligibility; however, it does not check if Form CCC-902 requirements are met. Validate the information in CD with the subsidiary data for all client eligibility criteria (NI 300- NI Part 315). NI 440-324-324.11 provides CD automation supporting review of Form CCC-902 filing requirement for NRCS program applicants and participants.

Contract Length and Limitations: CD does not currently enforce contract length or limits. Planners must ensure the expiration dates do not exceed applicable program limits. Iowa has set a 5-year maximum for all RCPP/EQIP management contracts. This allows eligible practices to be planned for a maximum of 5 years within a contract (total contract length may be longer than 5 years, pending when the first practice is scheduled and to allow expiration date to be 1 year after last practice is scheduled). Planners must also manually calculate and enter applicable payment caps when creating agreement items in CD. These caps ensure the contract does not exceed the applicable contract limits, follow guidance in 440-CPM-530-S-530.506-E, "Contract Limit".

A contract includes the following program documents - Form NRCS-CPA-1202 "Conservation Program Contract"; the Appendix to Form NRCS-CPA-1202; Form NRCS-CPA-1155, "Conservation Plan or Schedule of Operations"; Form NRCS-CPA-1156 "Revision of Plan/Schedule of Operation of Modification of a Contract"; and Form NRCS-CPA-152, "CPC Transfer Agreement". All contract participants listed on the NRCS-CPA-1202 must be included on the NRCS-CPA-1155 for RCPP obligations. States must generate the NRCS-CPA-1155 and NRCS-CPA-1202 documents in CD before obtaining participant signatures (NI 300-315-A). Individual contract participants must sign all contract documents on the same day (NRCS-CPA-1155, NRCS-CPA-1202, and NRCS-CPA-1202 Appendix). Multiple contract participants can sign on different days; the participant signature date entered in CD will be the last participant signature date. Field and area offices must follow the Iowa Delegation of Authority for Contract Development and Obligations of RCPP LMR applications. The NRCS approving official must sign contracts in CD. Selecting "obligate" in CD will attach the official's signature to forms NRCS-CPA-1155 and NRCS-CPA-1202.

Note: NRCS vendors are the only vendors that will be used for LMR producer contracts beginning in fiscal year (FY) 2024. The CD Applications and Agreements module will no longer allow using vendors established and managed outside of CD (e.g., PVND and CCR vendors). Prior year obligations (FY 2022 & FY 2023) may continue to use vendors established outside of CD for payment purposes. If a new application is entered for a participant who has a current 2022 or 2023 contract, and a new vendor number is created, use new vendor details for all business moving forward even prior year contracts.

Due to ongoing development of CD, there is currently no integration with Financial Management Modernization Initiative (FMMI) for obligating RCPP LMR contracts. No integration with FMMI means all contracts obligated in CD must be manually submitted to National via Bulk Obligation process for funds to be committed to each agreement/contract. Field offices must complete the RCPP LMR Producer Contract Preobligation Checklist, exhibit 530.520D before contract obligation. The area office must conduct preobligation quality assurance reviews for each funding period by reviewing all PreApproved applications and documenting the results on the RCPP LMR Producer Contract Preobligation Checklist (530.505 D).

Once a contract is obligated in CDAA, the applicable Area Program staff must complete the following actions within 5 business days of contract obligation, and within the quarter the agreement was executed:

- Prepare obligation package using the "RCPP18 LMR Producer Contract CD Transactions Obligation Checklist," verify all documents required on checklist are included in the packet.
- Complete the "Accounts Payable Services Branch Submission Checklist".
- Save obligation packet as a single PDF with the naming convention: "[Application ID] _Obligation Package."
- Upload the package into the Document Management System under Category "other" and document type "other agreement."
- Once uploaded the area office (AO) or designated staff must review the bulk obligation package in its entirety before notifying State office the obligation package is ready for bulk obligation submission
- Send email to Christine.Evans@usda.gov and Scott.Breach@usda.gov with subject line "[Application ID]_Obligation Package."

State Program Manager will send bulk obligation report to national bulk obligation team for review. After an obligation package is reviewed and funds are recorded in FMMI, NHQ will populate FMMI Document number in CD and send an email notifying states when obligation is complete (funds posted to FMMI). This email

notification is forwarded to APS/RCP-RC Specialist. Once FMMI documentation number is recorded in CDAA payments can begin.

Note: Contract participants can begin implementing practices as soon as a contract is obligated in CD, or sooner if an Early Start Waiver has been approved. However, payments cannot be made for those practices until FMMI DOC # is returned from National Bulk Obligation Team.

Follow-up actions: Request for a correction from national bulk obligation team due to an "issue found" with an obligation package, will be forwarded to applicable APS/RCP-RC; the request for correction must be completed within 3 business days, including a new obligation package uploaded to CD DMS for State office review.

Bulk Obligation Training, Reviews, and Quality Assurance:

Area office must provide additional training to supplement State office training and conduct quality assurance reviews to reduce the number of obligation packages returned for corrections. Preparing and reviewing manual obligations require significant resources at all levels. Ensuring submissions are completed correctly will reduce unnecessary delays in processing requests and reduce the number of packages returned to the field for corrections.

RCP-RC Payments:

NRCS collaborates with the Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC) Business Center (BC) to manage payments and modifications for RCP-RC. All obligations contracted through the bulk obligation process must submit a payment package to FPAC BC for contract holder(s) to receive payment. Modifications that affect contract obligation amounts, payment shares, expiration date, etc. require a modification package to be submitted to FPAC BC. If an action is completed in CDAA, such as an expiration date modification to change the expiration from 12/31/2026 to 12/31/2027, and it is not submitted to FPAC BC to be processed in FMMI; CDAA will show the modification as completed, but since it was never submitted and processed in FMMI on 1/1/2027 the contract will have expired.

Contracts that had payments and/or modifications completed outside of CDAA should have all been reconciled in 2025. Reconciliation consists of updating CDAA records for an agreement to match FMMI records (actual certified amount, payment amount, etc.). Reconciliations were completed mostly at the area level and what could not be done locally were completed by national. If it is discovered that a CDAA record (certified acres, payment amount, etc.) are not accurate for a contract, whether active or completed, please contact RCP-RC Program Manager to determine how to proceed; these records should all be correct or be corrected.

NRCS planners should process payment applications and generate Form NRCS-CPA-1245, "Practice Approval and Payment Application" within CDAA. There should be no payment applications being edited outside of CDAA (manual changes), if you have a situation that requires a manual change of a 1245 form contact our APS and state program manager. Conservation planners and program support specialists must pay close attention to fiscal year and calendar year deadlines for certifying practices and approving payments. Submissions to FPAC BC are subject to quarterly deadlines and other process requirements, such as accruals, published in FPAC directives.

Note: CD does not have a "minor change" option. Any contract increase, including those under \$1,500 per contract item number (CIN), requires the field office to complete the modification process prior to preparing a payment application. States must not combine a request for modification with a request for payment. If a contract requires both, submit the modification request first. Once the modification is processed via FPAC BC then the payment can be submitted.

Once payment is approved by district conservationist in Conservation Desktop, a payment package must be assembled and submitted to State office within 5 Business Days and within the quarter it is approved:

- Prepare a payment package using the "RCP-RC18 LMR Producer Payment Submission Checklist" verify all documents required on checklist are included in the packet.
- Complete the "Accounts Payable Services Branch Submission Checklist".
- The payment package should be saved as a single pdf with naming convention "[Agreement ID] _Payment Package."
- Reviewed package for correctness and emailed to Christine.Evans@usda.gov and Scott.Breach@usda.gov with subject line "[Agreement ID]_Payment Package."
- The payment package will be sent to FPAC BC to be processed directly from FMMI.
- The FPAC BC will send an email confirmation after the payment is processed, including FMMI invoice number. The FMMI invoice number is entered into the CDAA payment application module to complete the payment record in CD. This step is required for CIN status change to "Paid" in CD.

- States must add a copy of the email confirmation to the official participant case file and upload a copy to DMS, along with the payment package that was submitted to SNOW.
- If the APS receives an incomplete notification from FPAC BC, follow the instructions described in the email for corrective actions.

The area office or delegate is responsible for performing reviews and verifications before submitting the payment package to State office for processing.

RCPP Modifications:

NRCS planners should process modifications utilizing CDAA; all Modification features are available within CDAA except for partial land transfers for new participants. For partial land transfers, a modification of the original contract will be done in CDAA, but until functionality exists the new contract for new owner/operator will be done outside CDAA manually. Once this functionality becomes available, it will be required to complete all steps of the partial land transfer in CDAA.

All contract obligation increases require approval from Financial Resource Specialist (FRS) documented on the "Funding Availability and Verification" (FAV) Worksheet, prior to the NRCS obligating official (District Conservationist) approving the NRCS-CPA-1156. The FAV approved request must be for the exact amount of the modification increase in obligation; District Conservationist must verify FAV increase matches the Accounts Payable Service Branch (APSB) Submission Checklist BEFORE approving the modification in CDAA. FAV request and approval to ensure the increase in funds does not exceed the remaining unobligated LMR funding in the project. Funds must also be available in the budget period/year of the original obligation.

Modifications are not required for behind schedule contract items. If a modification must be completed for obligation change, deleting an item, or expiration date change, at this time planner can update behind schedule items if applicable.

Note: It is important to identify the correct "Work Breakdown Structure" (WBS) code and the correct budget period on the APSB Checklist to support contract modifications, important when changing obligation amounts and obligation increases. Your applicable PSA, APS, and/or RCPP – RC will assist with completing the APSB Checklist, FAV worksheet, and for assembling modification packages.

Modifications completed in CDAA require a modification package to be assembled and submitted to FPAC BC to be recorded in FMFI:

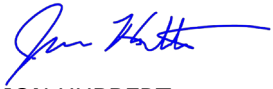
- Prepare a modification package using the "RCPP LMR Payment Submission Checklist," and the "Accounts Payable Services Branch Submission Checklist". The modification package must be saved as a single PDF with the naming convention, "[Agreement ID] _Modification Package #."
- Modification Package will be reviewed for correctness and emailed to Christine.Evans@usda.gov and Scott.Breach@usda.gov with subject line "[Agreement ID]_Modification Package #."
- The modification package will be reviewed, logged, and sent to FPAC BC to be processed directly from FMFI. The FPAC BC will send a confirmation email after the modification is processed.
- States must add a copy of the email confirmation to the official participant case file and upload a copy to DMS, along with the modification package submitted to FPAC BC.

WBS is required on the APSB Checklist for all obligations, payments, and modifications.

Table 2: Lists applicable WBS codes, project identification number and full project name

WBS CODES	Project Number	Project Name
NR.SI.RCP8.19.1894.19XXF	1894	Turkey River Watershed Partnership
NR.SI.RCP8.19.1896.19XXF	1896	Iowa Systems Approach to Conservation Drainage
NR.SI.RCP8.19.1976.19XXF	1976	North Raccoon Partnership for Soil and Water
NR.SI.RCP8.19.2374.20XXF	2374	Cedar River Source Water Partnership
NR.SI.RCP8.19.2266.21XXF	2266	Midwest Ag Water Quality Partnership (Renewal)
NR.SI.RCP8.19.2448.21XXF	2448	SE Iowa Watershed Partnership
NR.SI.RCP8.19.2570.21XXF	2570	Floyd River Water Quality Partnership
NR.SI.RCP8.19.2696.22XXF	2696	Innovative Conservation Agriculture
NR.SI.RCP8.19.2857.22XXF	2857	West Nishnabotna Water Quality and Infrastructure Partnership
NR.SI.RCP8.19.2881.23XXF	2881	Driftless Area Habitat for the Wild & Rare Phase 3
NR.SI.RCP8.19.2963.23XXF	2963	Protect Rathbun Lake

Contact. If you have questions, please contact Christine Evans, RCPP Program Coordinator, at (515) 323-2608 or christine.evans@usda.gov.



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