

USDA STATE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Ankeny Service Center, 1513 N. Ankeny Blvd. Ankeny, IA 50023

MICROSOFT TEAMS

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September 10, 2026

1:00 P.M. - 3:00 P.M.

AGENDA

Opening Comments

Jaia Fischer

- Introductions
- Approval of Minutes from June 18, 2026 (*attached*)

Review of Recommendations from Previous Meeting (June 18, 2026)

Jaia Fischer

- No recommendations presented

Agency Updates

- NRCS
- FSA

Jaia Fischer

Starlyn Perdue

Local Workgroup Feedback

Jaia Fischer/Dien Judge

- CDI Planner Feedback

Technical Topics

- RPP Resource Concerns

Sam Adams

Status of Farm Bill Programs

- Programs Report
- Partnerships Report
- CRP Report

Sam Adams

Scott Cagle

Curt Goettsch

Sub-Committee Reports

- CSP
- EQIP (*attached*)
- ACEP-WRE (*attached*)
- ACEP-ALE
- CRP
- Source Water Protection (SWP) (*attached*)
- Small Scale and Urban Ag

Cynthia Farmer

Paige Frautschy

Kelsey Fleming

Ryan Smith

Todd Bogenschutz

Christina Murphy/Marty Braster

Tim Palmer

Reports from Other Committee Members – *Member opportunity to share information.*

Guest Participation – *Guest opportunity to address committee, present opinion, or make recommendations.*

Additional Topics

Next Meeting Date

December 17, 2026

USDA STATE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Neal Smith Federal Building - 210 Walnut Street, Room 693, Des Moines, Iowa
NRCS Hugh Hammond Bennett Conference Room/Microsoft Teams

June 18, 2026
1:00 P.M. – 3:00 P.M.

Minutes

Opening Comments – Scott Cagle

- Welcome and call meeting to order.
- Introduction of attendees.
- Approval of minutes from March 19, 2026.
 - No comments or corrections noted by the committee.
 - Minutes were moved for approval by Kelsey Fleming and seconded by Susan Kozak.
 - Minutes were unanimously approved as written.
- Review of recommendations from the March 19, 2026, meeting.
 - ACEP-WRE: Approve the FY26 Iowa ACEP-WRE Geographic Area Rate Gaps (GARC).
 - FY26 Iowa ACEP-WRE GARC approved by State Conservationist on March 19.

Agency Updates – General

NRCS – Scott Cagle

- Jaia Fischer is the acting State Conservationist.
- Colton Buckley was named the new NRCS Chief effective May 18 upon former Chief Audrey Bettencourt's departure.
- Chief Buckley announced new NRCS motto, vision, and mission statements and update the strategic priorities.
 - Motto: Keeping Working Lands in Working Hands
 - Mission: We deliver practical, voluntary, and locally led conservation solutions that help producers conserve natural resources, strengthen agricultural production, and keep working lands productive for generations to come.
 - Vision: An America where working lands remain productive, resilient, and in the hands of those who steward them.
 - Strategic Priorities:
 - Preserve and protect agricultural land;
 - Shift to outcome-based conservation and farmer empowerment;
 - Re-center field engagement and strengthen technical expertise;
 - Expand wildlife conservation and outdoor access;
 - Strengthen partnerships by streamlining processes and accountability;
 - Optimize mission delivery by strengthening workforce culture; and
 - Modernize NRCS infrastructure and technology.
- Hiring updates
 - 5 District Conservationist (DC) positions were filled (internal hires) in the first round of approved positions.
 - A 2nd round of positions has been approved and announced: 6 DCs, 1 Archaeologist, 1 Compliance Specialist, and 1 Natural Resource Specialist (Easements).
 - The Iowa State Conservationist position has also been announced.
- A June 17 press release announced the upcoming reorganization of the USDA Farm Production and Conservation Mission Area (FPAC) which includes NRCS, FSA, RMA, and FPAC Business Center.
 - <https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/reorganization>

- Hillary Olson has been named the Acting State Resource Conservationist for Iowa effective June 29.
- Nicky Williams has been named Acting Assistant State Conservationist-MS effective May 4.
- Amy Fischer continues to be the Acting Assistant State Conservationist-Field Operations (ASTC-FO) for SW Iowa in addition to her role as the ASTC-FO for SE Iowa.

FSA Update – Starlyn Perdue/Curt Goettsch

- No current open positions.
- Recently completed a task force looking at efficiencies across the state and how FSA can continue to administer all programs effectively and efficiently for producers while supporting County Team members.
- State Committee was sworn in the week of June 15 – new members are on board and ready to act.
 - Members from Lyon, Worth, Wapello, Sioux, and Polk Counties.
- Starlyn attended the SSCWQC meeting and summer tour on June 15 and 16.
 - Commented on the opportunity to meet people and see the ways producers are implementing conservation practices across the state.

Local Workgroup Feedback – Jaia Fischer/Dien Judge

- CDI welcomed a new Planning Coordinator, Olivia Ziegler, on May 25.
- Floyd, Dickinson, Marion County meetings are scheduled.
- Worth, Wright, Webster meetings are concluded and plans finalized.

Technical Topics

- None Submitted.

Status of Farm Bill Programs

Programs Report – Rubyana Neely

- See report (*attached*).
- Obligations for all Programs are underway.

Partnerships update – Scott Cagle

- See report (*attached*).

CRP Report – Curt Goettsch

- Three CRP signups have concluded – General, Continuous (2 batches), and Grassland.
- No results on grassland CRP yet as it just concluded.
 - Grassland signup is the smallest in Iowa with about 40-50 submitted offers.
- General and Continuous CRP had 11,643 accepted offers on 185,776 acres.
 - Not all have been approved or contracted.
 - Decrease in overall acreage of 87,000 – about 2700 contracts.
- Signups concluded earlier in 2026 than in recent years due to the cap for acres in the program.
- Local offices are currently busy with crop reporting
- Iowa led nation in Transition Incentive Program – FSA incentivizes landowners with expiring CRP land to partner with and lease to beginning farmers or veteran farmers.
 - Interest in the program exceeded available funds.
- *Question - Johnson: What was the dollar amount for the expiring CRP program?*
 - *Answer – Goettsch: \$9 million.*

Subcommittee Reports

CSP – Cynthia Farmer

- See report (*attached*).
- No recommendations from the subcommittee this quarter.

EQIP – Paige Frautschy

- Did not meet.

ACEP-WRE – Kelsey Fleming

- Did not meet.

ACEP-ALE – Joe McGovern for Ryan Smith

- Discussed criteria, ACEP-ALE leaning towards grassland and how that could benefit grazers in southern Iowa, the Loess Hills, and select regions.
- Funding remains modest but well used.
 - Hoping the new NRCS priority of working lands will mean more funds coming to Iowa.
- The subcommittee wants to invite others, in particular, Iowa Cattlemen's, grazers, and ag producers to join the subcommittee.

CRP – Todd Bogenschutz

- See report (*attached*).
- The Savannah Institute presented a Corn Belt Windbreak project to the subcommittee (*attached with agenda*).

SWP – Christina Murphy

- Did not meet.
- SWP National Bulletin was released later than usual – tight deadline and STAC will not meet again before the deadline.
 - The subcommittee will likely meet to review the current watersheds and determine if any significant changes would need to be made and brought to the attention of NRCS.

Urban Ag –Tim Palmer/Sarah Nizzi

- Did not meet.

Reports from Other Committee Members

IDALS – Susan Kozak

- Received an additional \$3.7 million for the 22 counties above Des Moines called the Great Des Moines Watershed Program.
 - Cover crop announcement to be released soon.
 - Investigating some nutrient management ideas.
 - Possibly expanding the streamside buffer project to this area.
- Matt McDonald, WQI Projects Coordinator, has moved to the Mines and Minerals Bureau.
 - Hoping to backfill this position soon.

LICA – Bruce Barnhart

- A ribbon-cutting and grand opening of the new educational facility at the LICA Farm will be held on June 25.
 - Secretary Naig will be speaking at 10:00am.
 - The facility will be available for anyone involved in conservation to reserve and use.

CDI – Dien Judge

- Registration is open for the CDI Annual Conference on August 25 in Ames, IA.

Guest Participation

- None

Future Meeting Dates

September 17, 2026

Attendance

In-Person

Dien Judge, CDI
Kelsey Fleming, IDNR
Shawn Richmond, Iowa Farm Bureau
Susan Kozak, IDALS
Starlyn Perdue, FSA
Curt Goettsch, FSA

Dustin VandeHoef, Sen. Ernst's Office
Patrick Chase, NRCS
Scott Cagle, NRCS
Rubyana Neely, NRCS
Keiko Sampson, NRCS

Virtual

Dave Petty, Iowa River Ranch
Wendy Johnson, Climate Land Leaders
Ashley Utt, Pathfinders RC&D
Todd Bogenschutz, IDNR
Josh Divan, Pheasants Forever
Paige Frautschy, TNC
Catherine DeLong, ISU
Matt Dvorak, IDNR
Sarah Nizzi, Xerces Society
Adam Kiel, Ag Outcomes
Jeff Jensen, Trees Forever
Ben Porepp, Iowa Soybean Association

Scott Moats, The Nature Conservancy
Emmaly Renshaw, Iowa Valley RC&D
Joe McGovern, INHF
Bruce Barnhart, LICA
Adam Mason, PFI
Kelli Klink, IA Cattlemen's Association
Cameron Aker, Trout Unlimited
Todd Sutphin, ISA
Cynthia Farmer, Center for Rural Affairs
Christina Murphy, WDMWW
Chuck Isenhardt, Dubuque Area Land & Water Legacy
Sara Strassman, Trout Unlimited

8.24.27 EQIP Subcommittee Meeting Notes

Meeting summary

Quick recap

The meeting focused on updates and discussions related to the EQIP Subcommittee and NRCS programs in Iowa, particularly the Regenerative Pilot Program (RPP) and FY26 wrap-up. NRCS staff provided updates on the allocation and obligation of EQIP funds, highlighting the push to complete obligations earlier in the fiscal year and the successful meeting of the 25% RPP funding requirement. The group reviewed a survey about resource concerns and land uses relevant to the RPP, with input sought on which concerns were most applicable to Iowa. FY26 funding numbers and contract breakdowns were shared, including details on livestock, wildlife, beginning farmer, socially disadvantaged, and source water protection allocations. These can be found in the attached PowerPoint slide deck. Discussions also covered potential changes to funding categories, such as combining high tunnels and specialty ag, and the continuation of prairie pothole renewals as a state priority. The committee also discussed the workload prioritization tool (WPT) that was introduced to help streamline application processing. The importance of state goals like organic farming and specialty agriculture was emphasized. Participants provided feedback on these topics and shared perspectives on maintaining access to various program categories.

Key recommendations/feedback to share with STAC

- Committee expressed preference to combine the certified and transition organic categories into one unified organic category.
- Committee emphasized the importance of continuing the prairie pothole initiative and renewals, particularly by using a wildlife geospatial layer in the ranking process. This approach would give higher points to applications located in more sensitive wildlife areas.
- There was some reservation about merging the High Tunnels and Specialty Ag categories. The concern raised was that combining these might inadvertently impact access for those types of producers, especially compared to our more traditional applicants.

Next steps

Kelsey

- Connect with Greg Haddish to obtain the updated Wildlife Action Plan high opportunity areas layer and coordinate with Katie to provide it to NRCS.

NRCS

- Ensure all Subcommittee members have access to the RPPP survey link and clarify that responses should be submitted as a group for the STAC meeting on September 10th.
- Update the FY26 wildlife funding percentages slide deck and include the link to the RPPP survey, then send to Paige for distribution.
- Finalize the Workload Prioritization Tool (WPT) and have it in place for field staff by September 1st.

Paige

- Send out the PowerPoint slides and relevant links (including the RPPP survey and wildlife percentages breakdown) to the EQIP Subcommittee after the meeting.
- Help disseminate information about the EQIP batching date (September 25th) to farmers and partners.

Collaboration

- Subcommittee members: Review the RPPP resource concerns and provide any additional thoughts or feedback to NRCS via email before the STAC meeting on September 10th.
- Subcommittee members: Consider and provide feedback on state priorities (high tunnels, specialty ag, organic, prairie pothole renewals) for potential adjustments in FY27.

Summary

FY26-27 Program Updates Meeting

The meeting began with introductions from participants representing various organizations including the Nature Conservancy, Iowa DNR, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Center for Rural Affairs, Trees Forever, Iowa State Extension, and other conservation-focused groups. Sam Adams from NRCS provided updates on the FY26 program wrap-up, reporting that 99% of funds had been allocated totaling \$41.8 million, with the remaining 1% consisting of six orders worth only a few thousand dollars. For FY27, NRCS announced an accelerated timeline with a September 25th application deadline and a goal to complete obligations by the end of June, which is earlier than the typical 60-70% completion rate seen in previous

years. The discussion concluded with information about an RPP (Regenerative Partnership Program) survey that needs to be completed by September 11th, with the STAC meeting moved to September 10th to discuss the survey results before submitting them to national office.

Conservation Planning Resource Concerns

Paige asked about National's push to complete obligations earlier, and NRCS explained it's primarily to give farmers more time to implement contracts, particularly for practices like cover crops and no-till that require equipment purchases or seed ordering. The team reviewed a survey about identifying critical soil and water resource concerns for conservation planning, with NRCS explaining that producers would need to address all deficient critical resource concerns to be eligible for RPPP in Iowa. The discussion focused on reviewing the extensive list of resource concerns and components to determine which ones would be most applicable for Iowa's Regenerative Pilot program.

Iowa Regenerative Pilot Program Discussion

The team discussed the regenerative pilot program for Iowa, focusing on identifying relevant resource concerns and practices. NRCS presented a survey to assess soil and water resource concerns specific to Iowa for the RPP program, and participants provided input on priorities such as erosion control and livestock components. The group also reviewed FY26 EQIP funding data, including breakdowns by category and how the program met national priorities, including the requirement to spend 25% on RPP.

Wildlife Habitat Funding Breakdown

Kelsey asked about the percentage breakdown of funds allocated to different wildlife habitats, and NRCS confirmed that while percentages exist, they are not shown on the current slide deck but will be included. NRCS explained that \$11.3 million worth of contracts met additional priorities, with 43 contracts meeting multiple targets. The discussion covered various program categories including Landscape Conservation Initiatives, with MRBI receiving \$5.2 million and NWQI \$728,000, and an explanation of the transition from CPA/DIA/SEMA pools to 900 codes for hiring technical service providers. NRCS concluded by raising a question about potentially combining the high tunnel and specialty agriculture categories based on field staff feedback.

Specialty Agriculture Funding Updates

NRCS explained that specialty agriculture contracts focus on small-scale farms producing vegetables, nuts, or other crops that don't qualify for standard funding, with high tunnels being treated as separate from specialty agriculture applications due to high demand. The

team discussed FY27 plans, including a compressed timeline, minimal changes to payment schedules from FY26, and updates to the estimator tool with more visual options. NRCS introduced a new workload prioritization tool designed to help focus on high-priority applications by weeding out those that historically cannot be funded in Iowa, and requested the committee review and update state priorities including organic farming, specialty agriculture, and prairie potholes.

Workload Prioritization and Eligibility Deadlines

Paige discussed two key initiatives: a new workload prioritization tool (WPT) designed to screen applications after brief conversations with participants, and the implementation of eligibility deadlines roughly one month after ranking to prevent applications from being held up due to incomplete documentation. The eligibility deadline aims to address issues where ranked applications are delayed due to missing documents like landowner concurrence forms and business plans, which currently causes funds to be reallocated and affects program efficiency. Paige noted that while the WPT tool is a screening process rather than a detailed ranking system, it should help field office staff manage their workload more effectively by identifying potential applicants upfront.

Specialty Agriculture Funding Category Discussion

The committee discussed potentially combining specialty agriculture and high tunnel funding categories. NRCS explained that currently these are separate funding pools, and while combining them could simplify staff processes, it would require ensuring specialty agriculture practices don't lose access to funding. The group expressed concern about maintaining access for specialty crop producers while streamlining the process, with Kelsey asking about alternative approaches like setting aside a percentage of funds within a combined category. The discussion then shifted to considering a similar approach for organic initiatives, though the specific details were not fully explored in the transcript.

Organic Categories Pool Consolidation

The group discussed combining the organic certified and organic transition categories into a single pool, as the National Organic Transition Initiative funding was no longer available. NRCS explained that organic practices could still be funded through other categories, and the state's organic champion recommended combining the two organic pools. They also briefly touched on the Prairie Potholes Initiative, which focused on renewals for already funded projects to maintain long-term cover on sensitive acres.

Prairie Pothole Initiative Contract Updates

The group discussed the Prairie Pothole Initiative, focusing on renewal contracts rather than new applications due to limited funding. NRCS explained that the five-year management practice payments are flat rate per acre and require monitoring, with 9 contracts totaling approximately \$700,000 funded this year. The team agreed to explore incorporating wildlife priority areas into the ranking system, with Kelsey offering to connect with Greg Haddish to obtain updated Wildlife Action Plan data layers. NRCS requested feedback on state goals and priorities for the upcoming STAC meeting on the 10th, and mentioned plans to combine high tunnel and specialty agriculture categories while maintaining separate organic and certified transition categories.

Submitted by Paige Frautschy, The Nature Conservancy

ACEP-WRE Subcommittee
Tuesday, July 21, 2026
1:00 PM – 3:00 PM
6200 Park Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50321
Conference Room: Gull Point
Google Meet: <https://meet.google.com/kef-somj-nbo>

Attendance

Holly Shutt (DU), Heather Jobst (INHF), Hannah Grimm (NRCS), Sam Adams (NRCS), Derek Ballard (DU), Jeff Lucas (IAWA), Josh Spies (TNC), Josh Divan (PF), Drew DiAllesando (USFWS), Kelsey Fleming (DNR)

Introductions

- Welcome New Member: Jeff Lucas, Iowa Agriculture Water Alliance

FY26 WRE Program Updates

- FY26 General WRE
 - Review of FY26 Allocation
 - Iowa was allocated \$4,586,000 for WRE – General
 - \$1,974,000 for WRE – Stewardship
 - \$1,400,000 of WRE – Stewardship will be returned to National NRCS
 - 37 Applications submitted for FY26
 - Update on FY26 Prioritization Tool
 - 24 of the 37 applications were categorized as High Priority with the tool. This reduced workload for initial ranking deadline by 35%.
 - State Office – Easements sent out survey to field staff to get feedback on prioritization tool.
 - One application was marked as medium priority, but its score was high enough that it would have been funded had it been categorized as high priority.
 - Subcommittee requests that the prioritization tool be updated for FY27 to better reflect the ranking.
 - Funding Pool/Priority Areas – ranking pools in CART had to be minimized, so all applications were put into 1 pool, but the 4 categories still carried forward with the application. Subcommittee would like to review ranking questions prior to FY27 ranking.
 - 45% Depression
 - 45% Riverine
 - 10% Missouri River
 - Fen & Remnant – fund any eligible applications

Stewardship Funds Update

- Update on NOFO for stewardship/restoration agreement amendment
 - NRCS is hoping to have an FY27 NOFO for Stewardship dollars
 - Looking ahead, the plan is to have a batching period for stewardship projects

- The Office of the Deputy Chief for Programs has requested recommendations from all States to gather from each STAC

Regenerative Pilot Program (RPP) Resource Concern Feedback Survey

- Complete by September 3rd, 2026
- [Fill | FY27 Regenerative Pilot Program \(RPP\) – STAC Resource Concerns Survey:](#)

RPP Collaboration

Recommendations Needed For:

Critical soil and water resource concerns

Action

- Refine the list of soil and water resource concerns and the corresponding resource concern components to those that are of critical need for conservation planning and program delivery efforts within a State.

Context

- Planners will be required to assess all critical soil and water resource concerns.
- Producers will be required to treat all critical soil and water resource concerns and components that are deficient to be eligible for RPP in your State.

RPP Collaboration

Recommendations Needed For:

Eligible land uses

Action

- Identify the land use(s) that have the greatest need based on critical soil and water resource concerns.

Context

- Identified land use(s) will be those eligible for RPP in your State.

RPP Collaboration

Recommendations Needed For:

Additional primary regenerative conservation practices

Action

- Identify additional conservation practices essential, based on a practice's primary functions, to address a critical soil and water resource concern.
- Primary regenerative practices should be those practices that when installed lead to the highest likelihood of soil or water resource condition improvement.
- Practices should either have soil and water resource concerns as a primary purpose or have a value of 1 or greater in the CPPE.
- Avoid adding conservation practices to the list that are supportive/facilitating to one of the existing 15 primary regenerative practices or your additional primary practice(s), as supportive practices are already eligible for RPP funding.

Context

- To be eligible, producers will need at least one primary regenerative practice currently being implemented or planned to be implemented in the contract.

FY26 EQIP End of Year Data

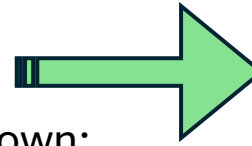
- Total Funds = \$41.8m
- Total Contracts = 461
- All counties received an EQIP contract except for 6 counties

National and State Priorities

- Livestock – 50%
 - AFO
 - Non-AFO
 - CPA CNMPs 101, 102
- Wildlife – 10%
 - Forestry
 - Riverine
 - Other Habitats
 - WLFW Monarch Butterfly
 - WLFW Northern Bobwhite Quail
- Beginning Farmer – 5%
- Socially Disadvantaged Farmer – 5%
- Regenerative Pilot Program (RPP) – 25%
- Source Water Protection (SWP) – 10%
- MRBI
- NWQI
- High Tunnels/ Small Scale Ag
- Organic Certified/ Transition

Targeted Fund Breakdowns

- Livestock
 - \$22.6m = 54%
 - Category Breakdown:
 - AFO = \$9.1m
 - Non-AFO = \$7m
 - CPA CNMPs = \$377k
- Wildlife
 - \$5.6m = 13%
 - Category Breakdown:
 - Forestry = \$777k
 - Riverine = \$1.9m
 - Other Habitats = \$790k
 - Funding Percentages (Initial divide):
 - Forestry = 40%
 - Riverine = 25%
 - Other Habitats = 35%



• Area Breakdown

NE -

- Forestry: 5 contracts = \$125k
- Riverine: 5 contracts = \$1.5m
- Other Habitats: 4 contracts = \$120k
- Prairie Pothole Renewals = 2 contracts = \$156k

SE -

- Forestry: 8 contracts = \$376k
- Riverine: 3 contracts = \$116k
- Other Habitats: 8 contracts = \$262k

NW -

- Forestry: 6 contracts = \$124k
- Riverine: 3 contracts = \$14k
- Other Habitats: 1 contract = \$226k
- Prairie Pothole Renewals: 7 contracts = \$531k

SW -

- Forestry: 7 contracts = \$240k
- Riverine: 2 contracts = 21k
- Other Habitats: 13 contracts = \$180k

Targeted Fund Breakdowns

- WLFW Monarch Butterfly
 - \$78k (Statewide)
 - WLFW Northern Bobwhite Quail
 - \$595k (only SW and SE Areas)
-

Targeted Fund Breakdowns

- Beginning Farmer
 - \$11.4m = 25%
 - 150 contracts
 - Category Breakdown:
 - NE = 47 contracts; \$4.4m
 - SE = 44 contracts; \$2m
 - NW = 26 contracts; \$3.4m
 - SW = 33 contracts; \$1.5m
- Socially Disadvantaged Farmer*
 - \$2.2m = 5.4%
 - 17 contracts
 - Category Breakdown:
 - NE = 6 contracts; \$811k
 - SE = 2 contracts; \$14k
 - NW = 4 contracts; \$1.3m
 - SW = 5 contracts; \$146k
- Source Water Protection (SWP)
 - \$5.2m = 12.5%
 - 54 contracts
 - Category Breakdown:
 - Ground Water Eligible/ Low Priority:
 - 2 contracts = \$387k
 - Ground Water High Priority:
 - 5 contracts = \$647k
 - Surface Water Priority:
 - 1 contracts = \$26k
 - RPP – SWP (NEW)
 - 8 contracts = \$1.5m
 - SWP conditions met but funded in other categories
 - 38 contracts = \$2.6m

Targeted Fund Breakdowns

- Regenerative Pilot Program (RPP)

- \$11.3m = 27%
- 67 contracts
- Of those, 43 contracts met additional priorities

- Category Breakdown:

- NE = 16 contracts; \$1.8m
- SE = 14 contracts; \$1.8m
- NW = 16 contracts; \$3m
- SW = 12 contracts; \$2.4m

- RPP Primary Practices:

- Conservation Crop Rotation (328)
- Contour Farming (330)
- Contour Orchard and Other Perennial Crop (331)
- Cover Crop (340)
- Drainage Water Management (554)
- Forage Harvest Management (511)
- Forest Stand Improvement (666)
- Irrigation Water Management (449)
- Mulching (484)
- Nutrient Management (590)
- Pest Management Conservation System (595) Grazing Management (528)
- Residue and Tillage Management, No Till (329)
- Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced (345)
- Stripcropping (585)

Targeted Fund Breakdowns

- Missouri River Basin Initiative (MRBI)
 - \$5.2m
 - 47 contracts
 - Category Breakdown:
 - NE = 21 contracts; \$2m
 - SE = 20 contracts; \$2.9m
 - NW = 6 contracts; \$307k
 - SW = 0 contracts; \$0
- National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI)
 - \$728k
 - 12 contracts
 - Category Breakdown:
 - Rathbun Lake
 - 10 contracts
 - \$560k
 - Wall Lake Inlet
 - 1 contract
 - \$94k
 - Silver Creek
 - 1 contract
 - \$74k

Targeted Fund Breakdowns

- Organic - Certified
 - \$182k
 - 3 contracts
 - Category Breakdown:
 - NE = 2 contracts; \$76k
 - NW = 1 contract; \$105k
- CPA, DIA and CEMAs
 - \$658k
 - 49 contracts
 - Category Breakdown:
 - NE = 19 contracts; \$149k
 - SE = 8 contracts; \$110k
 - NW = 19 contracts; \$359k
 - SW = 3 contracts; \$39k
- High Tunnels/ Specialty Small Scale Ag
 - \$613k
 - 24 contracts
 - Category Breakdown:
 - High Tunnels:
 - 19 contracts
 - \$464k
 - Specialty Ag:
 - 5 contracts
 - \$148k

FY27 Insight

- Application Batching Deadline
 - September 25th, 2026
- Ranking Deadline
 - January 29th, 2027
- Workload Prioritization Tool (WPT) Deadline (NEW)
 - October 9th, 2026
- Eligibility Deadline (NEW)
 - February 26th, 2027
- Obligation Deadline
 - June 15th, 2027
- Payment Schedules – minimal changes from FY26
- Updated Cost Estimator to include more planner friendly options and visuals
- Ranking Pool Layout – “tentatively” remaining the same using 4 area pools with categories for funding
- Slight increase in Funding
- National Targets to Remain the Same

- Once NRCS fills the Restoration Specialist vacancy on the easement team, they will consider landowner contracts for stewardship funding on specific practices, such as prescribed burning and brush management.
- Review of how projects/practices are prioritized for stewardship funds
 - Big projects are the priority to ensure stewardship funds are being spent and the value of stewardship dollars is being shown.

USDA NRCS Easement Staffing

- Update on NRCS staffing
 - Restoration Specialist – was advertised and interviews were conducted.
 - Realty Specialist - Ducks Unlimited will be advertised the part-time position soon.
- Partnership opportunities
 - RCPP – NOFO closes on August 24, 2026
 - Questions for future discussions: What does the Subcommittee want to see accomplished with this NRCS program?
 - Iowa Partners in Conservation funding - opportunity for partnership positions to assist with the WRE program in Iowa
 - Put together guide sheets for CUAs
 - Work through how landowner agreements for stewardship will function

Next meeting: TBD (September-October 2026)

Action Items for State Technical Committee:

None.

Submitted by Kelsey Fleming
August 24, 2026

To: Jaia Fischer, Acting Iowa State Conservationist

From: Source Water Protection Subcommittee Members

Date: August 11, 2026

RE: FY 27 High Priority Areas for Source Water Protection

NRCS issued a National Bulletin in June 2026, on refining source water local priorities for fiscal year 2027 by August 28, 2026

The full subcommittee met on July 2, 2026, to review the previous year's recommendation and have discussion on Priority Area Recommendations. Below represents approval by the subcommittee for recommendation to the State Conservationist.

Recommendations from the Source Water Protection Committee

- The SWP committee is still recommending that 55% of funds be distributed to the protection of groundwater sources and groundwater-influenced sources, as defined by the 2018 Iowa Drinking Water Compliance Report. 45% will be distributed to surface or surface influenced groundwater sources. If available funds are not able to be used in one priority area, additional applications could be funded in the other category until all funding sources are exhausted. Groundwater applications outside the wellhead protection area but within the HUC 12 should be given a lower ranking than those surface priority areas. The committee believes there is still benefit to practices outside the wellhead protection area but at a lower ranking than our surface water priority areas.
- All groundwater priority systems are outlined and have approved Phase 2 plans with high susceptibility or are a high nitrate community water system (>5 mg/l). Applications within a groundwater wellhead protection area (outlined in red) should be prioritized within the Iowa Ranking process over applications outside this area within the priority HUC12 to help ensure funds are being targeting where they will have the most impact. This can be done by a GIS layer that has been developed for this use.
- All surface or surface influenced priority HUC12s have approved watershed management plans or have TMDL Water Quality Improvement Plans
- The source water protection subcommittee would like to continue the recommendation to the State Conservationist that they allow 75% cost share initiative for eligible conservation practices that will address source water protection as outlined in the proposal and offer 90% cost share for those high priority practices (314 brush management, 327 conservation cover, 656 constructed wetland, 605 denitrifying bioreactor, 604 saturated buffer, 381 silvopasture, 612 tree/shrub establishment, 658 wetland creation, 659 wetland enhancement, 657 wetland restoration).
- The committee is recommending no changes to the existing priority watersheds from FY 2026. Iowa will remain under the 20% area limit.
- The attached listing of approved practices is unchanged from 2020 and continues to be the recommendation of the subcommittee.

- The attached map outlines the Source Water Protection Areas Priority HUC12s for FY 27

Enclosures

- Map & Itemized list - NRCS SWPA Priority HUC12s
- Recommended Practices specific to source water and drinking water systems

NRCS SWPA Priority HUC12s FY 2027

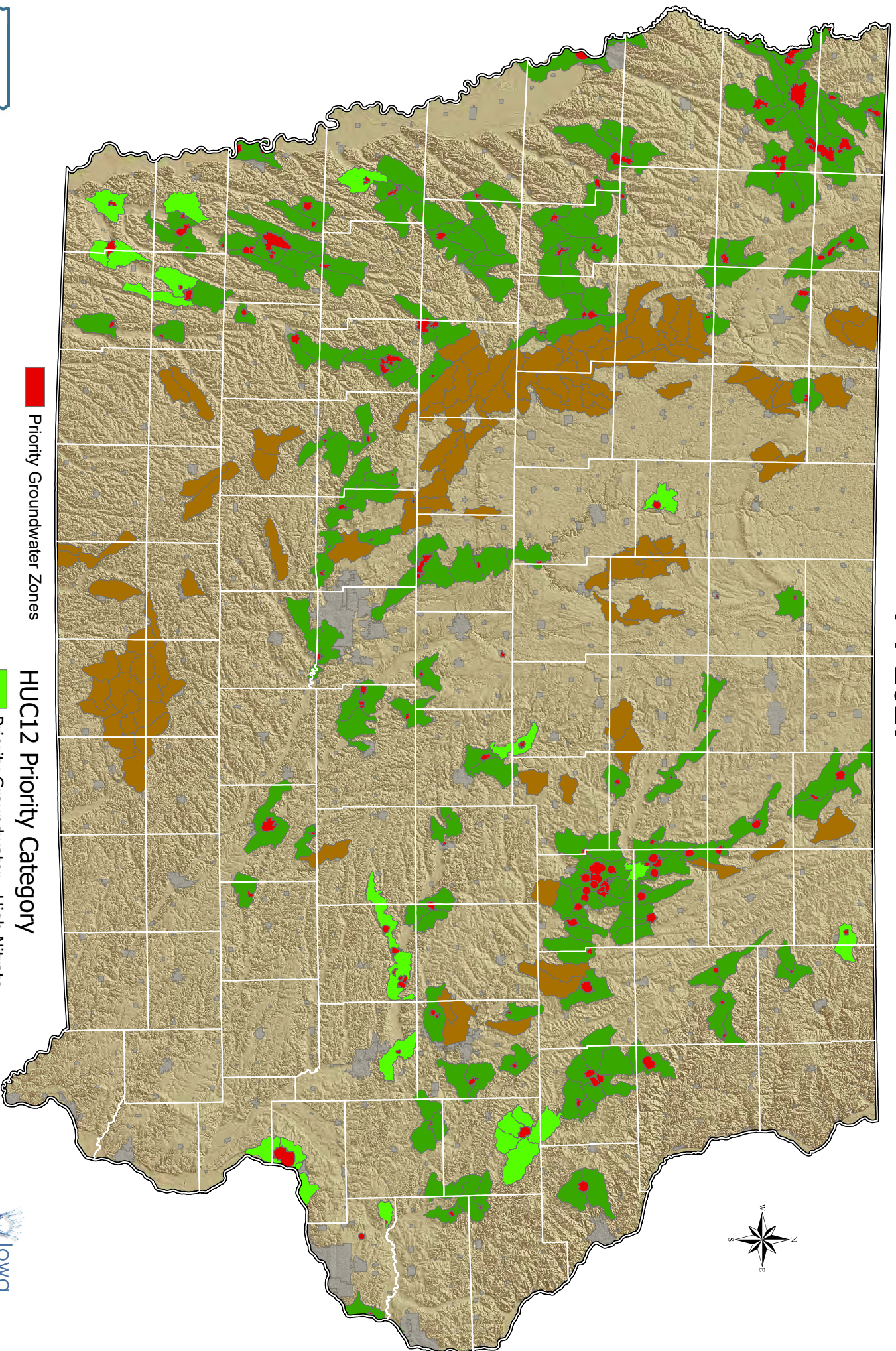
 Priority Groundwater Zones

HUC12 Priority Category

 Priority Groundwater - High Nitrate

 Priority Groundwater - Phase2

 Priority Surface Water



Iowa NRCS Source Water Protection Practices – FY -2027

Practice Name	Practice Code
Access Control	472
Agrichemical Handling Facility	309
Alley Cropping	311
Bedding	310
Conservation Cover	327
Conservation Crop Rotation	328
Constructed Wetland	656
Cover Crop	340
Critical Area Planting	342
Dam	402
Denitrifying Bioreactor	605
Filter Strip	393
Forage and Biomass Planting	512
Grade Stabilization Structure	410
Grassed Waterway	412
Integrated Pest Management	595
Irrigation Ditch Lining	428
Irrigation Land Leveling	464
Irrigation Reservoir	436
Irrigation Water Management	449
Livestock Shelter Structure	576
Mulching	484
Nutrient Management	590
On-Farm Secondary Containment Facility	319
Open Channel	582
Pond	378
Pond Sealing or Lining, Flexible Membrane	521A
Prescribed Grazing	528
Residue and Tillage Management, No-Till	329
Riparian Forest Buffer	391
Riparian Herbaceous Cover	390
Saturated Buffer	604
Sediment Basin	350
Short Term Storage of Animal Waste and Byproducts	318
Silvopasture Establishment	381
Sprinkler System	442
Stormwater Runoff Control	570
Streambank and Shoreline Protection	580
Subsurface Drain	606
Terrace	600
Tree/Shrub Establishment	612
Underground Outlet	620
Vegetated Treatment Area	635
Waste Facility Closure	360
Waste Storage Facility	313
Waste Transfer	634
Waste Treatment	629
Waste Treatment Lagoon	359
Water and Sediment Control Basin	638
Watering Facility	614
Well Decommissioning	351
Wetland Creation	658
Wetland Enhancement	659
Wetland Restoration	657
Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment	380
Windbreak/Shelterbelt Renovation	650