

Summary of NRCS Conservation Programs

July 2002

Landmark Legislation for Conservation

The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Farm Bill) is landmark legislation for conservation funding and for focusing on environmental issues. The conservation provisions will assist farmers and ranchers in meeting environmental challenges on their land. This legislation simplifies existing programs and creates new programs to address high priority environmental and production goals. The 2002 Farm Bill enhances the long-term quality of our environment and conservation of our natural resources. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) administers the following programs authorized or re-authorized in the 2002 Farm Bill.

Conservation of Private Grazing Land Program

The Conservation of Private Grazing Land Program (CPGL) is a voluntary program that helps owners and managers of private grazing land address natural resource concerns while enhancing the economic and social stability of grazing land enterprises and the rural communities that depend on them.

Conservation Security Program

The Conservation Security Program is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance for the conservation, protection, and improvement of soil, water, and related resources on Tribal and private lands. The program provides payments for producers who historically have practiced good stewardship on their agricultural lands and incentives for those who want to do more. The program will be available in fiscal year 2003.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary conservation program that promotes agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible National goals. Through EQIP, farmers and ranchers may receive financial and technical help to install or implement structural and management conservation practices on eligible agricultural land.

Farmland Protection Program

The Farmland Protection Program is a voluntary program that helps farmers and ranchers keep their land in agriculture. The program provides matching funds to State, Tribal, or local governments and non-governmental organizations with existing farmland protection programs to purchase conservation easements or other interests in land.

National Natural Resources Conservation Foundation

The National Natural Resources Conservation Foundation (NNRCF) promotes innovative solutions to natural resource problems and conducts research and educational activities to support conservation on private land. The NNRCF is a private, nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation. The foundation builds partnerships among agencies and agricultural, public, and private constituencies interested in promoting voluntary conservation on private lands.

Resource Conservation and Development Program

The Resource Conservation and Development Program (RC&D) encourages and improves the capability of civic leaders in designated RC&D areas to plan and carry out projects for resource conservation and community development. Program objectives focus on “quality of life” improvements achieved through natural resources conservation and community development. Such activities lead to sustainable communities, prudent land use, and the sound management and conservation of natural resources.

Wetlands Reserve Program

The Wetlands Reserve Program is a voluntary program that provides technical and financial assistance to eligible landowners to address wetland, wildlife habitat, soil, water, and related natural resource concerns on private land in an environmentally beneficial and cost-effective manner. The program provides an opportunity for landowners to receive financial incentives to enhance wetlands in exchange for retiring marginal land from agriculture.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) is a voluntary program that encourages creation of high quality wildlife habitats that support wildlife populations of National, State, Tribal, and local significance. Through WHIP, NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to landowners and others to develop upland, wetland, riparian, and aquatic habitat areas on their property.

For More Information

If you need more information about these and other conservation programs, please contact your local USDA Service Center, listed in the telephone book under U.S. Department of Agriculture, or your local conservation district. Information also is available on the World Wide Web at:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmland/2002/>



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<http://www.usda.gov/farmland>