

## Alabama: Overview

Through the National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is offering financial and technical assistance to farmers, ranchers and forest landowners interested in improving water quality and aquatic habitats in priority watersheds with impaired streams. NRCS will help producers implement conservation and management practices through a systems approach to control and trap nutrient and manure runoff. Qualified producers will receive assistance for installing conservation practices such as cover crops, filter strips and terraces. For over 75 years, NRCS has provided agricultural producers with assistance to implement voluntary conservation practices that protect natural resources while maintaining production and profits.

## Alabama's Priority Watersheds

### Guntersville Lake - Upper Scarham Creek

Located in the larger Short-Scarham Creek watershed in DeKalb County, Upper Scarham Creek has 31,222 acres within the watershed, with approximately 25,000 acres listed as agricultural land. Poultry operations (broiler and breeder hens) and beef cattle operations are located within the watershed. Approximately 75 percent of the agricultural land within the watershed is listed as moderately-high runoff acres. A total maximum daily load has been developed by the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) for Scarham Creek.

### Upper Choctawhatchee - Cox Mill Creek and Hurricane Creek

This watershed is located within the larger Choctawhatchee watershed



*Fencing is a conservation practice of excluding livestock access to streams.*

and lies solely within Geneva County in southeastern Alabama. The Cox Mill Creek-Hurricane Creek watershed has over 15,700 acres within the watershed, with about 12,500 acres of agricultural land. Approximately 75 percent of the agricultural land within the watershed boundaries is categorized as "high to potentially highly erodible land." Cox Mill Creek-Hurricane Creek Watershed currently has one water body listed on the ADEM 303(d) impaired water body list due to organic enrichment.

***The National Water Quality Initiative will work in selected watersheds to help farmers, ranchers and forest landowners improve water quality and aquatic habitats in impaired streams.***

### Turkey Creek – Luxapallila Creek

This watershed is located within the larger Luxapallila watershed in north-

west Fayette County. The Luxapallila watershed has over 20,000 acres with about 7,000 acres of agricultural land. Approximately 35 percent of the agricultural land within the watershed would be considered as "highly erodible land." Portions of Luxapallila Creek are also listed on the ADEM 303d list of impaired streams.

### Upper Black Warrior - Binion Creek

This watershed is located within the North River watershed with portion of North River on the 303(d) list of impaired streams. Binion Creek is located in northwest Tuscaloosa County with approximately 41,500 acres within the watershed. Approximately 75 percent of the watershed is in timber production, with 20 percent in agricultural production with poultry operations, cropland, pasture and hayland production. There has been emphasis placed on water quality with reducing sediment load as well as maintaining consistent temperatures for fish and wildlife within Binion Creek.

## Conservation Funding and Practices

NRCS conservation professionals will provide technical assistance and planning tools to determine which conservation actions will provide the best results to improve water quality on your land. Nutrient management systems, erosion control, conservation tillage, and buffers systems are just some of the practices being offered as part of the National Water Quality Initiative. To help install these conservation practices, financial assistance is available through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

## Partnerships

NRCS identified priority watersheds through the help of local partnerships and state water quality agencies. Partners sometimes offer financial assistance in addition to NRCS programs. NRCS will continue to coordinate with local and state agencies, conservation districts, nongovernmental organizations and others to implement this initiative. This strategic approach will leverage funds and provide streamlined assistance to help agricultural producers take needed actions to reduce the flow of sediment, nutrients and other runoff into impaired waterways.

## Producer Benefits

Water quality conservation practices benefit agricultural producers by lowering input costs and enhancing the productivity of working lands. Conservation investments are good for all Americans because well managed farms limit pollution from runoff, produce food and fiber, sustain rural economies, and provide food security to the Nation. All across the country—farmers, ranchers and forest landowners are voluntarily taking action and putting conservation on the ground to improve water quality on millions of acres!

## Public Benefits

NRCS is proud to be involved in a nationwide effort with landowners and communities to improve and protect our water resources. The landowners and farmers participating in the initiative will receive conservation payments to work on the land in a sustainable way providing cleaner water and helping the land remain productive into the future. Communities benefit by having clean waterways, safer drinking water and healthy habitat for fish and wildlife.

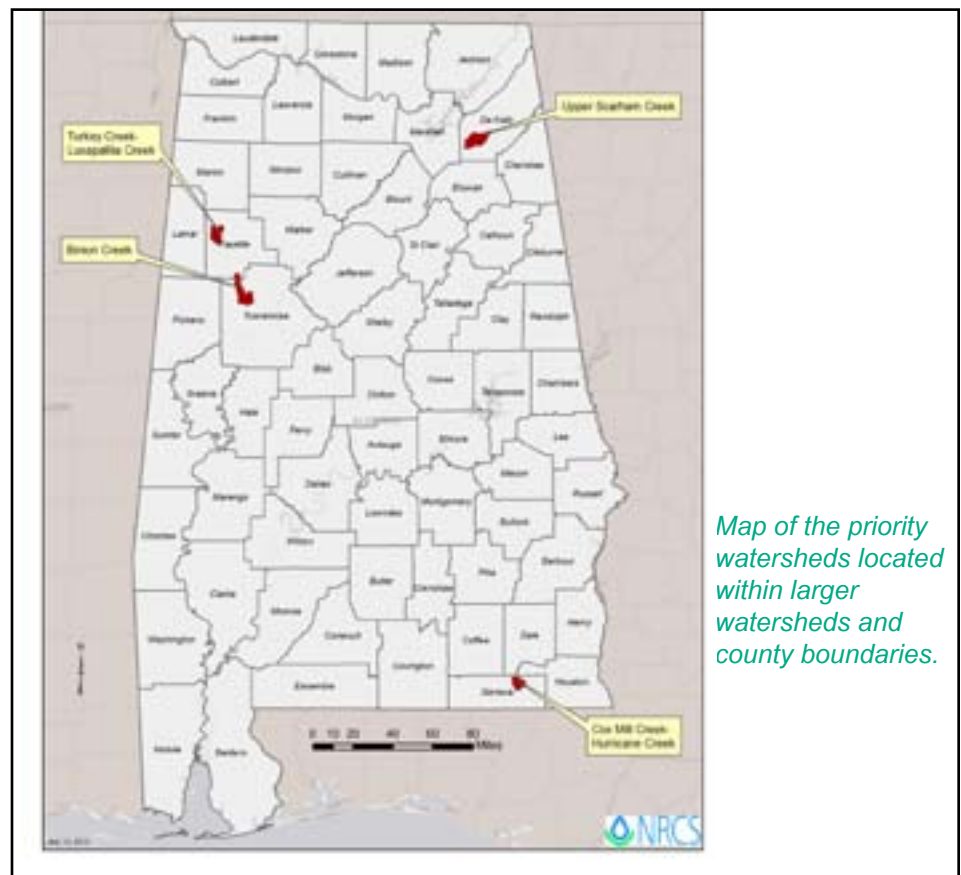
## How to Apply

Almost every county in the Nation has a **USDA Service Center**. To get started, make an appointment at your local office. You will need to establish eligibility and farm records for your land. NRCS will help you complete an application while explaining which conser-

vation practices are available in your watershed. Remember to check with your local NRCS office to see if you are located in a selected watershed. All applications for funding consideration, during fiscal year 2012, must be received by June 15, 2012.

## For More Information

Interested producers should visit their nearest USDA Service Center to determine eligibility. Individuals are not eligible for EQIP until they have completed the Farm Bill eligibility requirements. Contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service office or Farm Service Agency Office to begin this process. NRCS field offices are listed in the telephone directory under U.S. Department of Agriculture or on-line at <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov>.



*Map of the priority watersheds located within larger watersheds and county boundaries.*



United States Department of Agriculture  
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