

Improving Conservation Outcomes Through Partnerships

NRCS partners with state and local governments, tribes, agricultural organizations, non-profits and others to focus conservation assistance on local projects. Groups that direct funding and/or staff to address natural resource issues in New Mexico may be able to work with NRCS to leverage dollars and expertise to improve local conservation efforts.

NRCS partnership programs include:

- **Agricultural Water Enhancement Program**
- **Conservation Innovation Grants**
- **Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative**
- **Emergency Watershed Protection Program**
- **Farm and Ranchland Protection Program**
- **Grassland Reserve Program**
- **Wetlands Reserve Program**

Inside this pamphlet is an overview of NRCS partnership programs that may be applicable to your local projects.

Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) Program

In addition to the programs listed above, NRCS sponsors local Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Councils that plan, develop and carry out projects that benefit natural resources and local communities. RC&D Councils are volunteer, locally elected and civic leaders working together plan and complete projects. Program objectives focus on "quality of life" improvements achieved through natural resources conservation and community development. Non-government organizations and state, tribal and local units of government are invited to participate in the local RC&D Council to advance collaborative projects.

Contact NRCS

For more information on these or other NRCS programs, please contact your local NRCS office or visit us online at:

www.nm.nrcs.usda.gov

Partnering to Improve Local Conservation Efforts

To discuss conservation project ideas or to find more information about NRCS partnership programs, contact one of the offices below or visit us online at:

www.nm.nrcs.usda.gov

NRCS Office	Phone	NRCS Office	Phone
Alamogordo	(575) 437-3100	Lordsburg	(575) 542-9141
Albuquerque	(505) 761-5447	Los Lunas	(505) 865-4643
Aztec	(505) 334-6888	Lovington	(575) 396-5857
Carlsbad	(575) 887-3506	Mora	(575) 387-2424
Carrizozo	(575) 648-2941	Mountainair	(505) 847-2941
Chama	(575) 756-2581	Portales	(575) 356-6629
Clayton	(575) 374-9461	Raton	(575) 445-9571
Clovis	(575) 762-4769	Roswell	(575) 622-8746
Cuba	(575) 289-3278	Roy	(575) 485-2294
Datil	(575) 772-5722	Santa Fe	(505) 988-6253
Deming	(575) 546-9692	Santa Rosa	(575) 472-5401
Espanola	(505) 753-3508	Silver City	(575) 388-1569
Estancia	(505) 384-2272	Socorro	(575) 835-1710
Fort Sumner	(575) 355-2448	Taos	(575) 758-3863
Gallup	(505) 722-4357	T or C	(575) 894-2212
Grants	(505) 287-4045	Tucumcari	(575) 461-3801
Las Cruces	(575) 522-8775	State Office	(505) 761-4400 (800) 410-2067
Las Vegas	(505) 425-3594		



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NRCS Partnership Opportunities

Collaborative efforts to bring conservation funding, expertise & benefits to New Mexico



NRCS Conservation Assistance

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) delivers voluntary programs, products and services that help local people protect and improve natural resources on non-federal lands.

Our locally based NRCS staffs work directly with land managers, farmers, ranchers and others to provide technical and financial conservation assistance suited to each client's specific needs. We provide science-based information and guidance, plan conservation systems and practices, and offer financial assistance through the conservation programs of the 2008 Farm Bill.

NRCS voluntary programs increase stewardship on working cropland and rangeland, conserve water supplies, enhance wildlife habitat, preserve high-quality farmland, protect native plants and animals, enhance stream conditions, save energy, improve air quality, and do much more.

Conservation Funding

In 2009, NRCS delivered more than **\$26 million** in financial assistance to New Mexico landowners and growers. These funds helped offset the cost of materials and labor for the construction and installation of conservation practices. In addition, NRCS provided professional technical services to identify and plan these conservation measures.

Each year, NRCS directs additional conservation funding through a variety of programs to advance projects that improve natural resources, benefit local communities and promote sustainable land management.



Overview		Opportunities for Partners (state and local units of government, non-government organizations, tribes, agricultural organizations, and other entities)			Assistance to Program Applicants (farmers, ranchers and other private and tribal landowners who meet applicant eligibility requirements*)				
PROGRAM	PURPOSE	PARTNERSHIP PROPOSAL	PARTNER OBLIGATIONS	PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION	APPLICANT OPPORTUNITY	ELIGIBILITY*	FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE	PARTICIPANT OBLIGATIONS	
CCPI Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative	CCPI allows NRCS to leverage CSP, EQIP or WHIP funding against the funding, staff or other resources of project partners to address a high-priority natural resource concern in a defined area. With CCPI, program funding will be delivered to agricultural producers and private landowners; no funding may be used to cover the administrative expenses of project partners.	Eligible partners submit a proposal asking NRCS to consider directing technical and financial conservation assistance within a defined area to address a resource concern on private working land including cropland, grazing land, and non-industrial private forestland. The proposal must include specific information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The area to be addressed and project duration, Conservation practices to be applied, The expected level of landowner participation, Partner contributions, NRCS technical and financial assistance requested, Conservation benefits to be achieved, A plan for monitoring, evaluating, and reporting on progress, and Other specified information. 	Each proposal will be different, based on the contribution the partner has proposed to make. For example, the role of the partner may be to facilitate the submission of producer applications, or it may be to provide additional technical or financial assistance to participating landowners. <p>Applications are selected competitively based on the conservation benefits to be achieved and the funding, staff or other resources provided to the project by partners.</p>	Under CCPI, NRCS enters into a partnership agreement with a state or local government, federally recognized Indian tribe, producer association, farmer cooperative, institution of higher education, or nongovernmental organization with a history of working cooperatively with landowners. NRCS will enter into a multi-year agreement, not to exceed five years, that outlines the roles of NRCS and the partner(s), sets time frames, and describes required monitoring and evaluation activities. <p>After NRCS has entered into an agreement with a partner, NRCS will deliver conservation assistance to eligible landowners and producers through CSP, EQIP or WHIP.</p>	CSP Conservation Stewardship Program	With CCPI, eligible agricultural producers have the opportunity to voluntarily apply for and receive technical and financial assistance dedicated to the project area through CSP. The purpose of CSP is to help producers maintain existing stewardship and adopt additional conservation.	Private agricultural land and non-industrial private forests not enrolled in CRP, WRP, GRP or the Conservation Security Program	Annual payment based on land use and contract details; up to \$40,000/year and \$200,000/contract	The participant will enter into a program contract of 1 to 5 years and develop and follow a plan to address an additional resource concern.
					EQIP Environmental Quality Incentives Program	With CCPI, eligible agricultural producers have the opportunity to voluntarily apply for and receive technical and financial assistance dedicated to the project area through EQIP. The purpose of EQIP is to help producers undertake structural, vegetative and management practices to conserve soil, water and other resources on working land.	Private working land, including cropland, grazing land, and non-industrial private forestland	Set practice payment rates, generally 50-75% of average costs; limited to \$300,000 per contract or participant over 6 years	The participant will enter into a program contract of 1 to 10 years and work with NRCS to develop a conservation plan to protect natural resources on the land.
					WHIP Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program	With CCPI, eligible landowners have the opportunity to voluntarily apply for and receive technical and financial assistance dedicated to the project area through WHIP. The purpose of WHIP is to help establish and improve fish and wildlife habitat on private lands.	Private ag and forestland not in the Conservation Reserve Program, Wetlands Reserve Program, Healthy Forests Reserve Program, or similar program	Set practice payment rates, generally 50-75% of average costs; limited to \$50,000 per individual annually	The participant will enter into a program contract of 2 to 10 years and prepare and follow a wildlife plan.
AWEP Agricultural Water Enhancement Program	With AWEP, NRCS leverages EQIP financial and technical assistance against the funding, staff or other resources of project partners to conserve ground and surface water or improve water quality on agricultural lands. AWEP funding will be delivered to agricultural producers; no AWEP funding may be used to cover the administrative expenses of project partners.	Eligible partners submit a proposal asking NRCS to consider directing technical and financial assistance through EQIP within a proposed area to conserve surface or groundwater and/or improve water quality on private working land, including cropland, grazing land and private forestland. The proposal must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The area to be addressed and project duration, Conservation practices to be applied and the expected producer participation, Partner contributions and the NRCS assistance requested, A plan for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on progress, Benefits to be achieved, and other specified information. 	Each proposal is different, based on partner contributions. For example, a partner's role may be to facilitate the submission of applications or to provide additional technical or financial assistance to participating producers. Applications are selected competitively based on the benefits to be achieved and the funding, staff or other resources provided by partners.	For those proposals selected for the program, NRCS will enter into a partnership agreement, not to exceed five years, that outlines the roles of NRCS and the partner(s), sets time frames, and describes monitoring and evaluation activities required by the project partner(s). After NRCS has entered into an AWEP agreement with a partner, NRCS will deliver conservation assistance to eligible agricultural producers.	EQIP Environmental Quality Incentives Program	With AWEP, eligible agricultural producers have the opportunity to voluntarily apply for and receive technical and financial assistance dedicated to the project area through EQIP. The purpose of EQIP is to help producers undertake structural, vegetative and management practices to conserve soil, water and other resources on working land.	Agricultural producers within the scope of the AWEP project who meet all EQIP eligibility requirements	A set practice payment rate, generally 50-75% of average costs for selected practices; payments are limited to \$300,000 per contract or participant over 6 years	The participant will enter into a program contract of 1 to 10 years and work with NRCS develop and follow a conservation plan to protect natural resources on the land.
CIG Conservation Innovation Grants	CIG awards competitive grants to non-federal or non-governmental organizations, tribes or individuals with projects that will stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies. CIG funds projects targeting innovative on-the-ground conservation, including pilot projects and field demonstrations. CIG is not a research program.	CIG is announced each year through a funding notice on a national level for projects that are watershed-based, regional, multi-state or nationwide in scope. In addition, NRCS New Mexico offers a separate state CIG component for projects that are farm-based, multi-county, small watershed, or statewide in scope. Applications should describe the use of innovative technologies or approaches to address a natural resource conservation concerns. Proposed projects must involve EQIP-eligible producers. Natural resource concerns eligible for funding through CIG will be identified in the funding announcement and may change annually.	Funds for single- or multi-year projects, not to exceed three years, will be awarded through a competitive grants process. At least 50 percent of the total cost of the project must come from non-Federal matching funds (cash and in-kind contributions) provided by the grantee. The Request for Proposals (RFP) outlines these responsibilities.	The grantee also is responsible for providing the technical assistance required to successfully complete the project. NRCS will provide technical oversight for each project receiving an award.	CIG Conservation Innovation Grants	CIG will benefit agricultural producers by ultimately providing more options for environmental enhancement and compliance with federal, state and local regulations.	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
EWP Emergency Watershed Protection Program	With EWP, NRCS assists project sponsors and individuals conducting emergency measures to relieve imminent hazards to life and property created by a natural disaster after a flood, fire, drought or other occurrence. EWP work must yield benefits to more than one person.	A project sponsor must send the local NRCS office a letter requesting EWP funding. The letter must be signed by an official of the sponsoring organization and include information on the nature, location and scope of the problem. The letter must be submitted within 10 days of the disaster for exigency situations and within 60 days of the disaster for non-exigency situations. City and county governments, general improvement districts, conservation districts, and tribal governments are the most common sponsors of EWP projects.	Sponsors are responsible for providing land rights to do repair work and securing the necessary permits. Sponsors are also responsible for furnishing local cost share or in-kind services for accomplishing the work.	EWP provides financial and technical assistance to remove debris from streams, protect destabilized streambanks, establish cover on critically eroding lands, repair damaged conservation practices, or purchase floodplain easements. Work must reduce threats to life and property and must be economically and environmentally sound from an engineering standpoint.	EWP Emergency Watershed Protection Program	EWP helps reduce threats to life and property. The purpose is to help groups of people with a common problem. It is generally not an individual assistance program.	Public and private landowners are eligible for assistance but must be represented by a project sponsor.	Up to 75% of the construction cost of emergency measures or up to 90% in limited resource areas.	
FRPP Farm and Ranchland Protection Program	FRPP is a voluntary program to help entities with established easement programs work with farmers and ranchers to protect agricultural land from conversion to non-agricultural uses. NRCS directs matching funds to the partner to purchase easements. Partners must provide at least 50 percent of the easement value.	Eligible partners submit a proposal that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates capability to acquire, manage, monitor and enforce easements; Shows the availability of funds for the proposed easement(s); Contains a detailed description of the property; Lists and provides pertinent information about additional partners involved in acquisition of the easement and their estimated financial contribution; and Includes other required information. 	If the proposal is selected for funding, NRCS and the partner will enter into a cooperative agreement that outlines responsibilities, conditions of the easement, and other requirements. NRCS will conduct administrative and technical reviews of the proposal, appraisal, conveyance document, title, etc.	The property is voluntarily placed under an easement by the landowner, who retains ownership and continues farming or ranching. <p>The participating partner manages and monitors the easement.</p>	FRPP Farm and Ranchlands Protection Program	Landowners voluntarily enroll into a permanent easement to protect their land from conversion to non-agricultural uses. The permanent easement stays with the title to the land for perpetuity.	Private agricultural land; land that is publicly owned or already subject to an easement or deed restriction limiting non-agricultural conversion is not eligible.	An easement payment based on the land's appraised easement value	The landowner will continue to use the land for agricultural purposes and work with NRCS to develop a conservation plan to protect natural resources.
Other Partner Program Opportunities:		<p>Grassland Reserve Program (GRP): GRP is a voluntary program to help farmers and ranchers protect their agricultural land from conversion to other uses. With GRP, NRCS assists landowners with conserving and restoring grassland, rangeland, pastures and certain other lands. New Mexico landowners may submit applications to enter their land into permanent easements or for 10-year, 15-year or 20-year rental agreements in exchange for easement payments and/or restoration cost-share.</p> <p>Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP): With WRP, NRCS assists landowners interested in restoring or protecting wetland areas. New Mexico landowners may submit applications to enter their land into permanent easements, 30-year easements, or restoration cost-share agreements in exchange for easement payments and/or cost-share. Tribes are also eligible for a 30-year WRP option.</p> <p>Assistance for Acequia Associations: NRCS can provide planning and design work for acequia projects funded through state programs. Contact the local NRCS office to initiate project planning.</p> <p>Small Watershed Program: NRCS can help state and local agencies and tribes with protecting watersheds from damage caused by erosion, floodwater, and sediment. Assistance can also be to conserve and develop water and land resources on a watershed scale. Contact the local NRCS office for more information.</p>							

* Applicants must be eligible for participation in USDA programs, as described in the program rule. Some program requirements and criteria may change from year to year. For more information, talk to a local NRCS representative or find additional program details and regulations online at: www.nm.nrcs.usda.gov.