



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **USDA Receives 500+ Pre-Proposals for New Program to Provide Support for On-the-Ground Conservation Efforts**

*Applicants Selected to Submit Full Proposals by October 2*

*Indianapolis, IN, Aug. 7, 2014* – The USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service’s (NRCS) new Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) drew an overwhelming response from partners across the nation. Of the almost 600 pre-proposals submitted in July, about 230 were invited this week to continue the process by submitting full proposals by October 2, 2014.

“This program provides an entirely new approach to conservation at this scale,” said Jane Hardisty, Indiana State Conservationist. “RCPP offers a unique opportunity to harness innovation and welcome new partners into the conservation mission. The program puts our partners in the driver’s seat, allowing them to find creative solutions to the conservation issues in their areas.”

RCPP provides a way for private companies, tribes, local communities and non-government partners to collaborate and invest in cleaner water and air, healthier soil and enhanced wildlife habitat. It will enable NRCS to focus on critical conservation areas, and leverage private sector funding to maximize conservation investments.

Applicants from across the nation applied to the program, requesting more than six times the \$394 million in available funding. By mid-July, partners had submitted pre-proposals for rigorous evaluation, including 201 for projects related to eight previously-designated critical conservation areas, 60 for multi-state and national-level projects, and 278 for state-level projects.

Nine proposals were received for Indiana funding. Of those, two applicants were selected to proceed with a full proposal. Five additional proposals that include work in Indiana were selected-- two in critical conservation areas and three in the multi-state/national-level category.

“The number of pre-proposals from Indiana and across the nation show a like-minded determination to improve the quality of our lands and their ecosystems,” said Hardisty. “As the program grows, we expect to see Indiana’s forward-thinking and proposal counts grow with it.”

“Local decision making is empowered through RCPP, bringing together partners to design conservation projects tailored to our needs in Indiana,” said Jerry Roach, Assistant State Conservationist for Programs. “The proposals submitted in Indiana demonstrate innovation, encourage broad partnerships, and address Indiana’s critical issues of water quality, soil quality and at-risk habitat.”

Since the enactment of the 2014 Farm Bill, USDA has made significant progress to implement each provision of this critical legislation, including providing disaster relief to farmers and ranchers; strengthening risk management tools; getting more conservation on the ground, expanding access to rural credit; funding critical research; establishing innovative public-private conservation partnerships; developing new markets for rural-made products; and investing in infrastructure, housing and

community facilities to help improve quality of life in rural America. For more information, visit:  
[www.usda.gov/farmbill](http://www.usda.gov/farmbill).

For more information on NRCS services and programs, please contact your local NRCS District Conservationist. To locate the office in your area, please visit:  
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/in/contact/local/>. Information on RCPP and other NRCS programs can also be found at:  
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/in/programs/farmbill/>

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