

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

North Carolina



Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Program Updates

Farm Bill Programs

FY 2024 Farm Bill conservation financial assistance programs, special funding pools and initiatives in North Carolina included:

- \$22,608,633.00 was allocated for FY2024 to fund EQIP Classic applications received during the current sign up. Total EQIP Classic contracts obligated were 402 contracts for a total of \$22,437,485.1.
- \$30,209,000.00 was allocated for FY2024 to fund EQIP IRA applications received during the current sign up. Total EQIP IRA contracts obligated were 440 contracts for a total of \$30,095,656.
- To support New & Beginning Farmers and Ranchers in the state, 181 producers have been awarded contracts for a total of \$9,123,476 in EQIP Classic and 136 for \$7,495,716 in EQIP IRA; and \$5,279,788 in CSP Classic (64 Contracts) and \$3,216,832 in CSP IRA (56 Contracts).
- To support Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers (SD) in North Carolina funded \$3,784,806 in EQIP Classic (70 Contracts) and \$2,826,002 in EQIP IRA (42 Contracts); and \$1,156,613 in CSP Classic (18 Contracts) and \$870,541 in CSP IRA (20 Contracts).
- Overall, 298 applications were contracted for a total of 174 for \$13,450,550 in CSP Classic and 124 for \$8,168,214 in CSP IRA.
- RCPP18 Land Management Contracts funded 9 contracts for \$2,097,343.
- For our Agricultural Land Easements (ALE), a total of \$4,263,250 has been obligated. Under our Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE) a total of \$8,156,731 has been obligated. Under the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) for ALE a total of \$15,173,973 has been obligated.

All programs- \$92,757,104

Hot Topics

Tropical Storm Helene Recovery Efforts

NRCS is now accepting applications under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program from agricultural producers, foresters, and ranchers that have been affected by Tropical Storm Helene until **January 10, 2025**. Eligible land includes cropland and non-industrial private forestland.

Counties included in this EQIP sign up: Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Macon, Jackson, Swain, Transylvania, Haywood, Henderson, Buncombe, Madison, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Watauga, Mitchell, Yancey, Surry, Wilkes, Yadkin, Stokes, Forsyth, Caldwell, Burke, McDowell, Alexander, Catawba, Iredell, Rutherford, Polk, Cleveland, Lincoln, Gaston and Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI).

NRCS has initiated the Emergency Recovery Plan (ERP), this contains information to assist NRCS staff to effectively implement the Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP). To date, relevant points of contact have been identified. The EWP Program Manager has filed the Emergency Damage Report (EDR) in the EWP Tool. The EDR has been acknowledged and has been assigned project number 5044. This number will be used for all future correspondence regarding TS Helene.

Eligible Sponsors for EWP are: a State or political subdivision thereof, Federally recognized Indian tribe or tribal organization, or unit of local government with – A legal interest in or responsibility for the values threatened by a watershed emergency

- Capability to obtain necessary land rights
- Capability to carry out any operation and maintenance (as a site requires)
- Capable of entering and administering a locally-led grant agreement with NRCS (& FPAC); services, procurement, manage construction.

Sponsors who may be interested must submit a formal, signed request (via mail or email to the STC for assistance within 60 days of the natural disaster occurrence, **or 60 days from the date when access to the sites become available.**

Tropical Storm Debby & Tropical Cyclone 8 Recovery Efforts

NRCS has initiated the ERP for Tropical Storm Debby & Tropical Cyclone 8 under one report. EWP eligible counties being reported are: Robeson, Columbus, Bladen, Hoke, Scotland, Brunswick.

The EDR has been acknowledged and assigned project number 5045. This number will be used for all future correspondence regarding Tropical Storm Debby & Tropical Cyclone 8.

North Carolina
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General FY 2025 Updates

Fiscal Year 2025 State Advisory Allocations

Allocations are based on a combination of the following components: national program manager input, historical program obligation levels, and NRCS leadership decisions. In addition, there are numerous upcoming congressional actions that could impact FY 2025 allocations, including a new Farm Bill and the FY 2025 discretionary appropriations. As a result of these uncertainties, every attempt was made to provide an advisory allocation using the FY 2024 overall baseline as a minimum.

FY 2025 Program Allocations:

General- \$41,788,396

IRA- \$58,831,867

Total- \$100,620,263

Pending applications- 1,511 for EQIP (both General and IRA), 782 for CSP (both General and IRA). These pending applications were carried over from the last fiscal year and will be instrumental as we try to obligate this historic amount of conservation funding for the state.

RCPP Awards

On Oct. 23 The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced a historic \$1.5 billion for 92 partner-driven conservation projects through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), a partner-driven approach to conservation that funds solutions to natural resource challenges on agricultural land. North Carolina is the lead state in three of those projects. Projects include:

Partnering to Protect Johnston County Farmland- This project aims to increase the Johnston County Soil and Water Conservation District's capacity to implement conservation easements to protect Johnston County farmland and keep agriculture viable in that region. The goal of this project is to reduce urban sprawl in Johnston County, NC.

The Land of the Pines: Protecting Critical Conservation Areas and Working Lands in the Lumber River Watershed- This project will leverage state funds with federal dollars to protect working lands in the Lumber River Basin. Through this partnership, the North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Sciences will use RCPP to fund conservation easements in critical areas within the Lumber River Basin Ecosystem Restoration in North Carolina's High Country:

Providing Ecological Uplift for North America's Oldest Rivers- This project will work to restore stream banks and establish riparian buffers in western North Carolina to improve water quality, enhance wildlife habitat, promote sustainable agriculture, sequester carbon and build strong community partnerships to ensure long-term environmental, social, and economic benefits for the region.

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