



United States Department of Agriculture



Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service



# Partnering with NRCS

10/25/2023 Martin Lowenfish

Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service

[nrcs.usda.gov/](https://nrcs.usda.gov/)

# Private Lands and Conservation

70 percent of the land in the lower 48 states is owned by private landowners.

88 percent of all surface water falls on private land before reaching lakes, streams, and groundwater aquifers.

The quality of our environment depends on the millions of individual decisions private landowners make every day.



# NRCS Farm Bill Conservation Programs

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)  
Financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers to address natural resource concerns

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)  
Promotes coordination of NRCS conservation activities with partners that offer value-added contributions to resource concerns

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)  
Provides financial and technical assistance to help conserve agricultural lands and wetlands and their related benefits.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)  
Helps agricultural producers maintain and improve their existing conservation systems



# Source Water Protection (SWP) Language in the 2018 Farm Bill

## Section 1244(n): Source Water Protection Through Targeting of Agricultural Practices

Encourage the protection of drinking water sources through the following methods:

- Identify local priority areas for drinking water protection in each state in collaboration with State Technical Committees and community water systems
- Provide increased incentives for practices that relate to water quality and quantity and protect drinking water sources while also benefitting producers
- Dedicate at least 10% of funds available for conservation programs (with the exception of CRP), each year beginning in FY 2019 through FY 2023, to be used for source water protection

# Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)



- Signed into law by President Biden in August 2022
- The IRA provides NRCS with \$19.5 billion in **additional** funds for its **existing** conservation programs:
  - \$8.45 billion Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
  - \$4.95 billion Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)
  - \$3.25 billion Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
  - \$1.4 billion Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)
  - \$1 billion Conservation Technical Assistance
- **The IRA does not create any new programs** – it gives NRCS additional funds to **expand its existing climate efforts** and satisfy unmet demand
- IRA funds began in **fiscal year 2023**; all IRA funds must be spent by **September 30, 2031**



# The IRA Focuses on Mitigation

- The IRA directs NRCS to use the additional funds specifically for **climate change mitigation**.
- Mitigation activities **reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve carbon storage**.
- FY24 list of **NRCS climate-smart mitigation activities:** [nrcs.usda.gov/mitigation-activities.pdf](https://nrcs.usda.gov/mitigation-activities.pdf)
- NRCS is continually evaluating mitigation activities and IRA implementation approach and will update them as appropriate.

Natural Resources Conservation Service  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

## Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry (CSAF) Mitigation Activities List for FY2024

Highlighted activities have been added to the list in FY2024.  
Noted activities are added to the list as "provisional."

Mitigation Categories	Code	Conservation Practice Standard Name <sup>(2)(3)</sup> (practice unit)	Code	Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) Enhancement Activities
Soil Health	327	Conservation Cover (acres)	E327A	Conservation cover for pollinators and beneficial insects <sup>(4)</sup>
			E327B	Establish Monarch butterfly habitat
	328	Conservation Crop Rotation (acres)	E328A	Resource conserving crop rotation
			E328B	Improved resource conserving crop rotation
			E328E	Soil health crop rotation
			E328F	Modifications to improve soil health and increase soil organic matter
			E328N	Intercropping to improve soil health
			E328Q	Perennial grain crop conservation rotation
	329	Residue and Tillage Management, No Till (acres)	E329A	No till to reduce soil erosion
			E329B	No till to reduce tillage induced particulate matter
			E329C	No till to increase plant-available moisture
			E329D	No till system to increase soil health and soil organic matter content
			E329E	No till to reduce energy
	332	Contour Buffer Strips (acres)	None Available	
	336	Soil Carbon Amendment (acres) <sup>(5)</sup>	None Available	
	340	Cover Crop (acres)	E340A	Cover crop to reduce soil erosion
			E340B	Intensive cover cropping to increase soil health and soil organic matter content
			E340C	Use of multi-species cover crops to improve soil health and increase soil organic matter
			E340D	Intensive orchard/vineyard floor cover cropping to increase soil health
			E340E	Cover crop to minimize soil compaction
E340G			Cover crop to reduce water quality degradation by utilizing excess soil nutrients	
E340H			Cover crop to suppress excessive weed pressures and break pest cycles	
E340J			Using cover crops for biological strip till	
E340J			Cover crop to improve moisture use efficiency and reduce salts	
345			Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced Till (acres)	E345A
	E345B	Reduced tillage to reduce tillage induced particulate matter		
	E345C	Reduced tillage to increase plant-available moisture		
	E345D	Reduced tillage to increase soil health and soil organic matter content		
	E345E	Reduced tillage to reduce energy use		

FACTSHEET • SEPTEMBER 2023
FARMERS.GOV/CLIMATE-SMART



# Facilitating Practices Enable Mitigation

## Tree/Shrub Establishment (612)

Tree Shrub Site Preparation (490)  
Access Control (472)

## Conservation Crop Rotation (328)

Cover Crops (340)  
Irrigation Water Management (449)  
Pest Management Conservation System (595)

## Waste Separation Facility (632)

Waste Transfer (634)  
Roofs and Covers (367)

## Prescribed Grazing (528)

Watering Facility (614)  
Stream Crossing (578)  
Fence (382)  
Livestock Shelter Structure (576)

- IRA funding can also be used for practices needed to *facilitate a mitigation practice*.
- Here are some examples of conservation systems that include mitigation practices and the practices that may be needed to facilitate them.

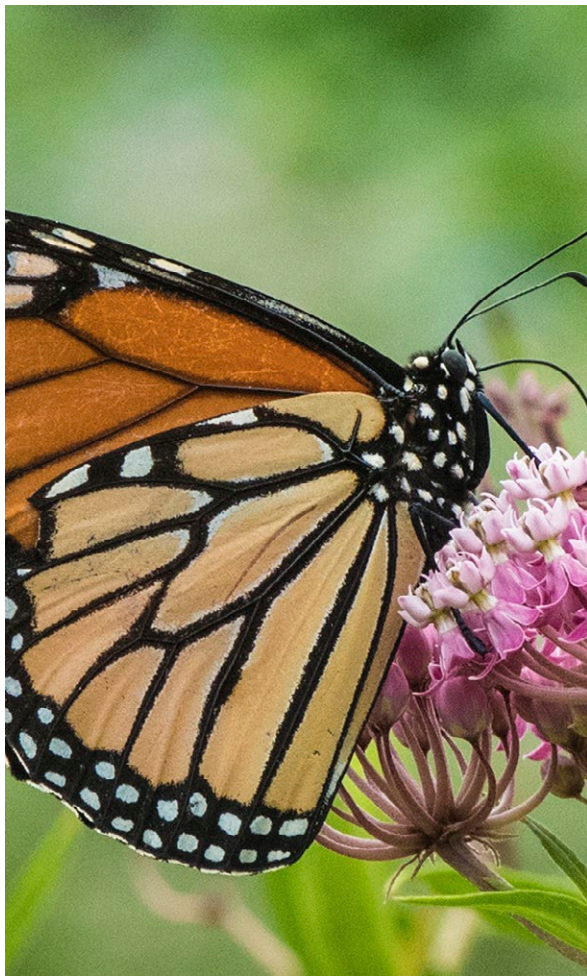


Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service

[nrcs.usda.gov/](https://nrcs.usda.gov/)



# Conservation Systems' Multiple Benefits



- Conservation systems may also provide other benefits besides climate change mitigation:
  - Reducing risks and vulnerabilities and building resilience to climate change impacts (***climate change adaptation***)
  - Addressing other resource concerns like soil health, water quality, pollinator and wildlife habitat, and air quality
- Although many conservation practices can provide other benefits, **practices without mitigation benefits are not eligible for IRA funding unless they are needed to facilitate a mitigation practice.**





Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service

[nrcs.usda.gov](https://nrcs.usda.gov)