

NRCS Announces \$235 Million Available

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack recently announced an investment of up to \$235 million to improve the nation's water quality, combat drought, enhance soil health, support wildlife habitat, and protect agricultural viability. The funding is being made available through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), the newest conservation tool of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). NRCS is now accepting pre-proposals for the second round of funding for RCPP. The deadline is **July 8, 2015**.

Through RCPP, partners propose conservation projects to improve natural resources on private lands. For proposals in Kansas, resource priorities include fish and wildlife habitat, plant condition, soil health, water quantity, and water quality.

RCPP, created by the 2014 Farm Bill, empowers local leaders to work with multiple partners—such as private companies, local and tribal governments, universities, non-profit groups and other non-government partners—along with farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners to design solutions that work best for their region. Local partners and the federal government both invest funding and manpower into projects to maximize their impact. The RCPP program helps USDA build on an already record enrollment in conservation programs, with over 500,000 producers participating to protect land and water on over 400 million acres nationwide.

“This is a new, innovative approach to conservation,” said Kansas NRCS State Conservationist Eric B. Banks. “RCPP allows local partners the opportunity to design and invest in conservation projects specifically tailored for the resource concerns here in Kansas. These partnership efforts keep our land and water clean, and promote tremendous economic growth in agriculture, construction, tourism, and other industries. We encourage partners to visit NRCS about any questions they may have regarding RCPP.”

For more information on applying, visit the [RCPP website](#). To learn about technical and financial assistance available through conservation programs, visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/GetStarted or [local USDA service center](#). For more on the 2014 Farm Bill, visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/FarmBill.