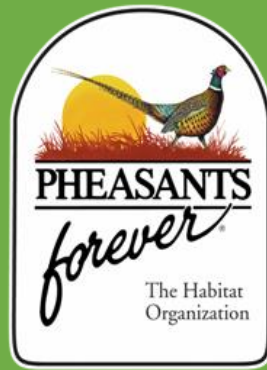


Making The **FARM BILL** Work For **YOU**

Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative
2015 Annual Meeting
Chippewa Falls, WI
March 19-21
Scott Stipetich-WI Farm Bill Biologist



Farm Bill Biologists: Our Job is to Assist You!

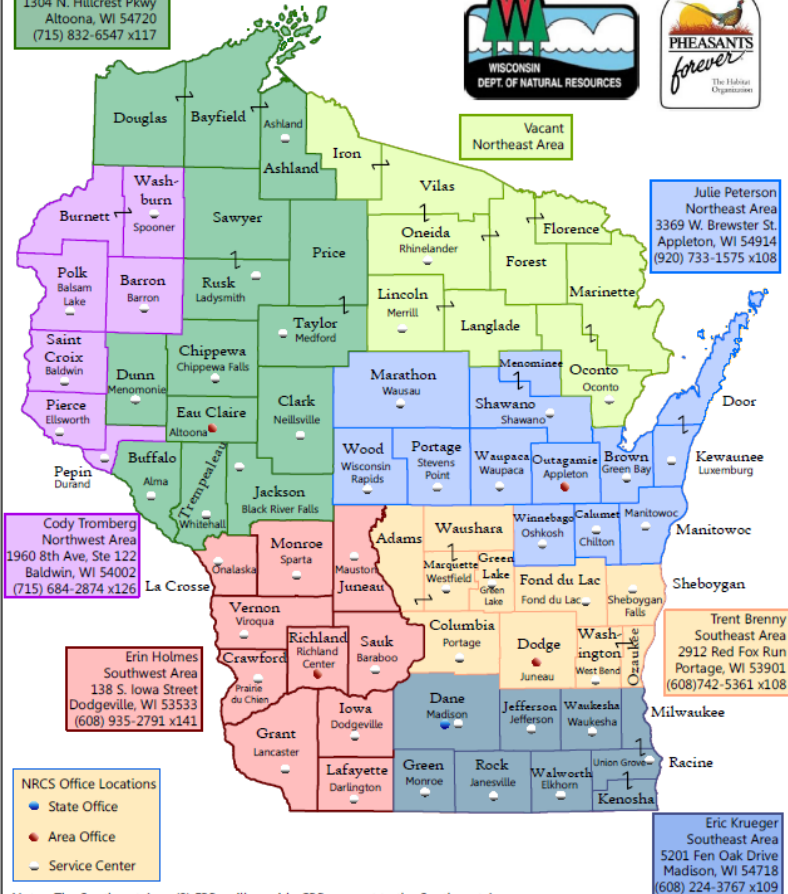
Locations of WI Partnership Farm Bill Biologists



United States
Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources
Conservation Services



Scott Stipetich
Northwest Area
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Baldwin, WI 54002
(715) 684-2874 x126

Erin Holmes
Southwest Area
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Dodgeville, WI 53533
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Southeast Area
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Portage, WI 53901
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Eric Krueger
Southeast Area
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Madison, WI 54718
(608) 224-3767 x109

Our Job is to Assist You!

Farm Bill is what again?

- Agricultural and Food policy tool of the Federal Government.

Federally Funded Titles Include:

- Trade
- Agricultural Research
- Rural Development
- Farm Credit
- Food and Nutrition Programs
- Marketing

✓ **CONSERVATION**

Farm Bill Players



United States Department of Agriculture



Farm Service Agency



Natural Resource Conservation Service

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

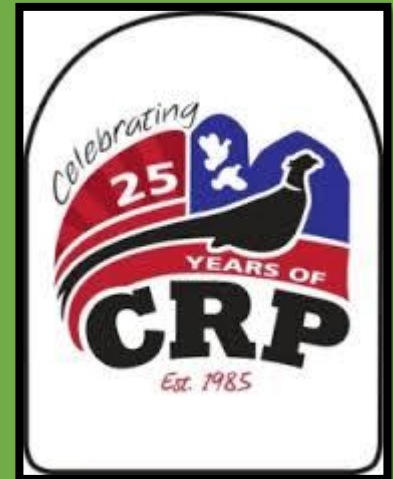


NRCS Photo



USDA PROGRAMS

All Are Voluntary!





Agricultural Conservation Easement Program- Wetland Reserve Easement



Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE)

Restoring hydrology to historic conditions through conservation easements (the new WRP)

Landowner Incentives

- Perpetual or 30 Year Easements
- Land Use Value \$\$
- Restoration \$\$ and design
- Quite enjoyment
- Compatible Use “Privileges”
- “Keep Out”
- Taxes

NRCS Incentives

- Perpetual or 30 Year Easement
- Development Rights
- Management Rights

Before



After



Wetland Reserve Easements



What are the Wetland Reserve Easements

Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE) are a voluntary option for landowners to restore, protect and enhance wetlands on private property. It is an opportunity to secure an easement and to receive financial assistance to restore wetlands that have been drained for agriculture production or have been altered by multiple flood events.

Options

The program offers landowners these options:

- Permanent Easement
- 30-year Easement
- 30-year Contract (Tribal land only)

How WRE Works

Landowners who choose to participate in WRE may sell a conservation easement to USDA to restore and protect wetlands. The landowner voluntarily limits future use of the land, yet retains private ownership. The landowner and NRCS develop a plan for the restoration and maintenance of the wetland.

Landowner Eligibility

- Ownership of the land for the last two years
- Must be in compliance with highly erodible land and wetland conservation provisions



WRE Financial Assistance

Permanent Easement: A conservation easement in perpetuity that pays up to 100 percent of the easement value and 75 to 100 percent of restoration costs.

30-year Easement: Easement expires after 30 years that pays 50 to 75 percent of the easement value and 50 to 75 percent of restoration costs.

30-year contract: Are only available to enroll acreage owned by Indian Tribes. Payment rates are commensurate with 30-year easements.

What's Eligible?

Land must be restorable and suitable for wetland and wildlife benefits

- Farmed or converted wetlands
- Adjacent lands that contribute to wetland functions and value
- Upland buffer areas for ecological benefits
- Riparian areas that link wetland areas
- Lands significantly altered by flooding

*For more information, visit
www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov/programs*

What Land is Not Eligible?

- Wetlands converted after 1985
- Wetlands that are not degraded and functioning properly
- Land that is in public ownership

Some of the Benefits:

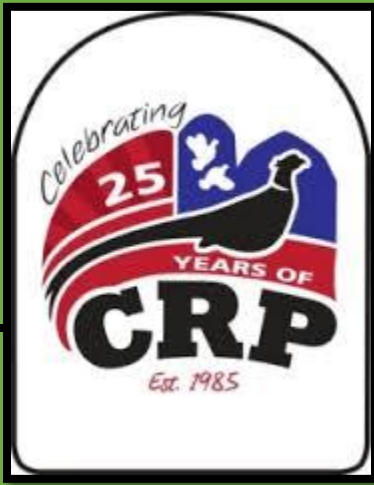
- Restore, protect and enhance wetland ecosystems
- Protect the land from soil erosion
- Reduce flooding
- Opportunity to develop wildlife habitat including threatened and endangered species habitat
- Improve water quality and recharge groundwater
- Protect biological diversity

How to Apply

Landowners may apply by contacting the NRCS office in the county in which the land is located.



The USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

Protecting working lands from erosion and improving water quality.

Landowner

- 10-15 Year Contracts
- Soil Rental \$\$
- Grass/Tree Perennial Cover
- Restoration \$\$ and design
- Mid Contract Management

NRCS

- Increase Water and Soil Quality
- Increase Wildlife Habitat

Practices include (but not limited to)...

...Field Windbreak,



Shallow Water Areas for Wildlife,



Filter strip,



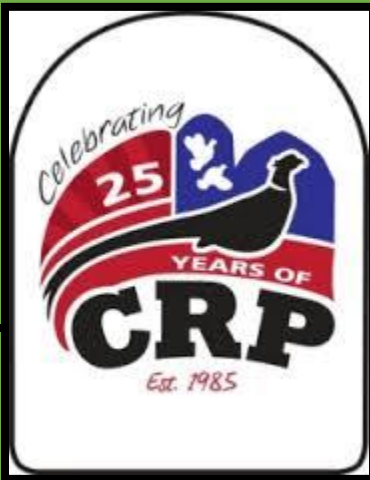
Wetland Restoration,



©Douglas Racine

And Quail Buffer.

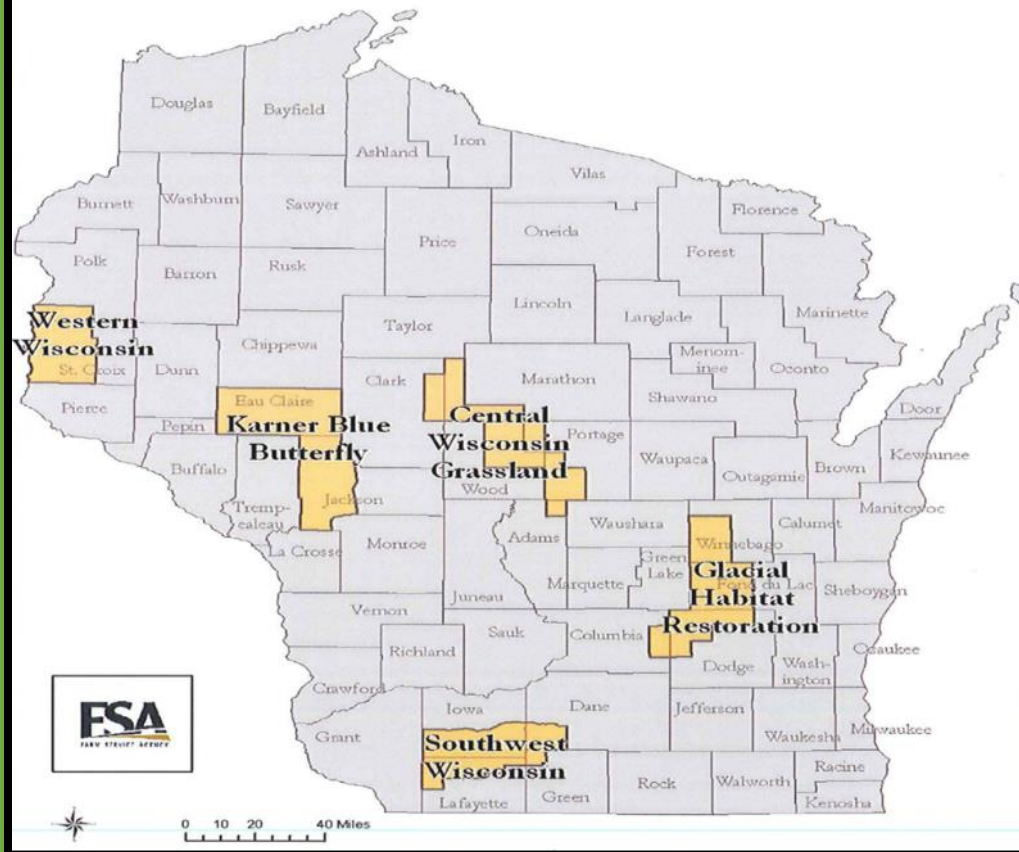




CRP – State A cres For wildlife Enhancement (SAFE)

Higher paying CRP in very specific areas

**2008 Approved SAFE Projects
(State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement)**





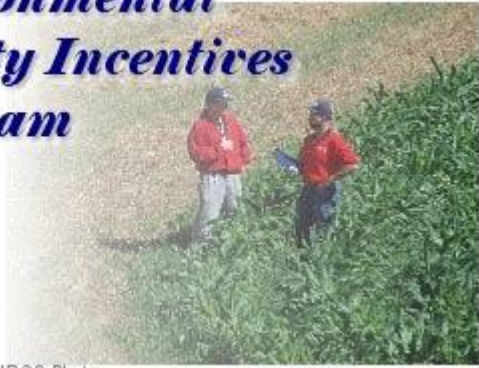
Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

Just think CRP on steroids

❖ Can be perpetual easement

- Filter Strips
- Riparian Buffers
- Waterways
- Wetland Restoration

*Environmental
Quality Incentives
Program*



NRCS Photo

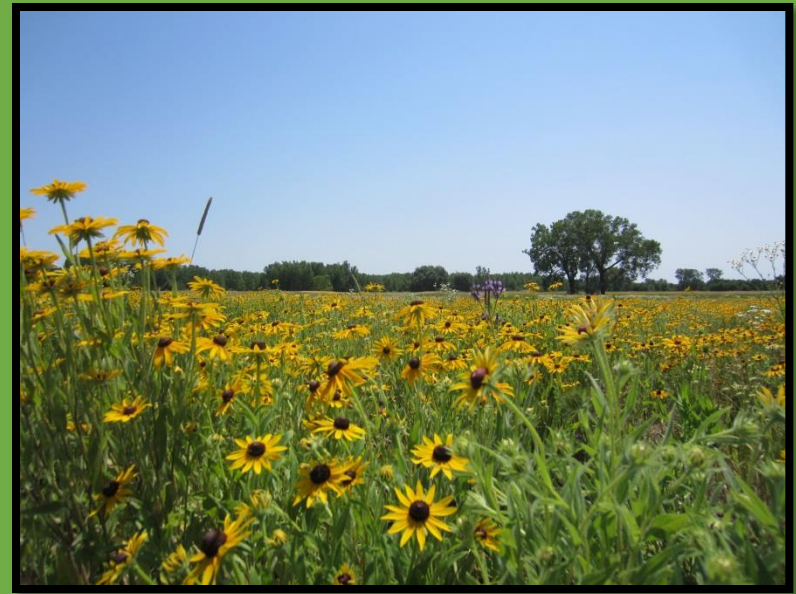
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

The catch all program

- Flat Rate Payments For Conservation Practices
- Short Contracts 1 – 15 Years
- Broad Eligibility and Many Conservation Practices To Choose From
- One Time Payment

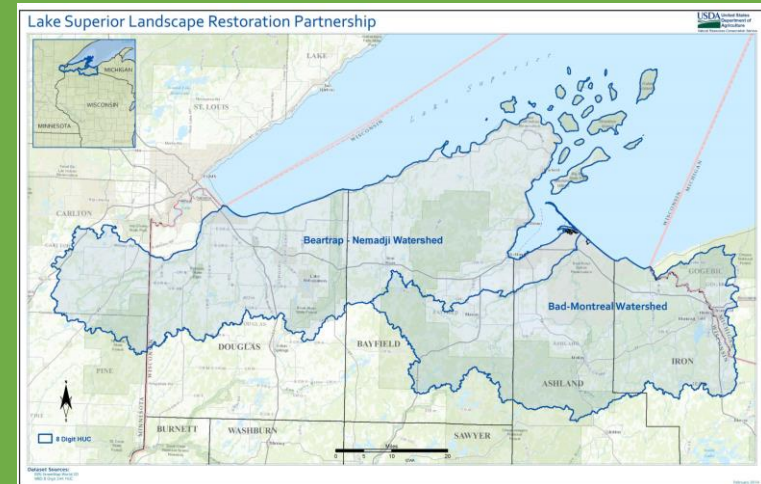
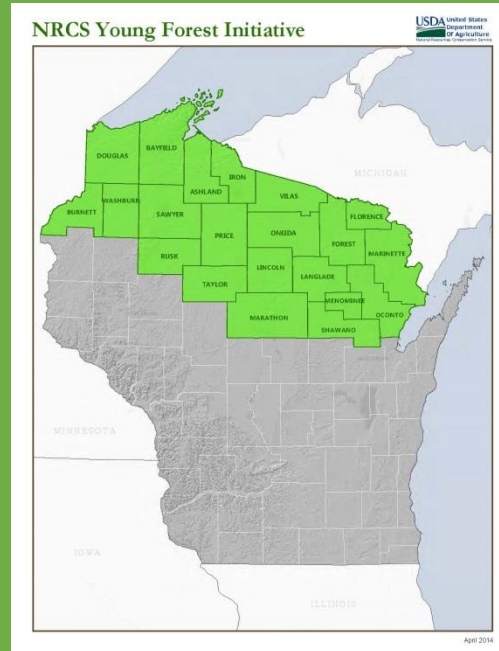
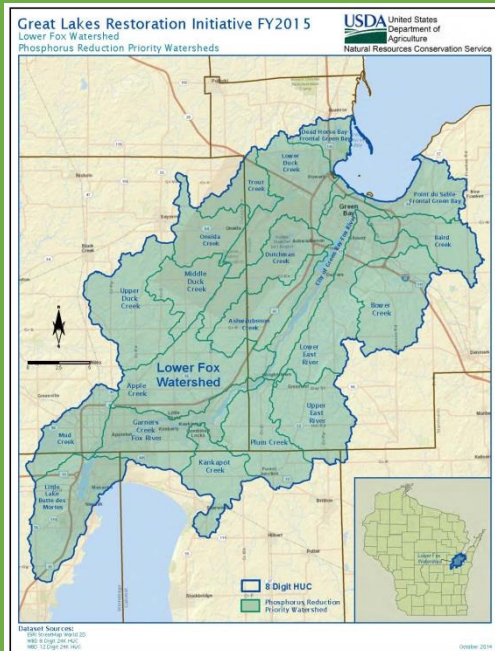
Practices include (not limited to)...

- Native/Introduced Grass Cover
- Brush Management
- Forest Stand Improvement
- Prescribed Fire
- Pollinator Habitat Planting
- Prescribed Grazing
- Tree/Shrub Plantings,



EQIP – Special Initiatives

- DALCI
- GLRI
- Honey Bee Conservation
- Young Forest Initiative
- Lake Superior Landscape Restoration Partnership



NRCS Fact Sheet:

Environmental Quality Incentives Program



What is the Environmental Quality Incentives Program?

The Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) is a voluntary program that promotes agricultural production, forest management and environmental quality. EQIP offers financial and technical help to assist landowners install or implement conservation practices on their land that protect soil and water quality.

The Plan

Farmers will develop a conservation plan, if they don't already have one, for the acreage affected by the EQIP practices. Conservation practices must meet NRCS technical standards.

NRCS evaluates and ranks each application, with higher priorities given to the practices that address local resource concerns, and provide the most environmental benefit.

The Professionals

NRCS has skilled professional staff available to help you plan and design conservation improvements for your farm.

Technical Assistance is free. Contact the NRCS office to discuss what conservation practices will work best for you.



EQIP Financial Assistance

Agricultural producers on agricultural land are eligible. Projects are selected based on environmental value. EQIP offers payments for 100 conservation practices to help all types of farmers

How to Apply

Landowners may apply by contacting the NRCS office in the county in which the land is located.

EQIP applications will be accepted at any time throughout the year. Cutoff dates will be scheduled to allow for ranking, and selection of applications for funding. NRCS, with advice from the State Technical Committee, local working groups, or both, as appropriate, will rank and select applications received up to the cutoff date.

Wisconsin Priorities

The 2014 Farm Bill offers assistance for all types of agriculture, including:

- Specialty crops
- Organic farming
- Forestry
- Historically underserved farmers*

*higher payment rates available



Some of the Eligible Practices

- Grassed waterways
- Cover crops
- Nutrient management plans
- Grazing plans
- Cattle crossings
- Buffer strips
- Contour strip cropping
- Watering systems
- Stream fencing
- Critical area plantings
- Terraces
- Manure management systems including storage structures and barnyard runoff protection

Check out the list of 100 eligible practices and payments on the web at www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov/programs



The USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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