

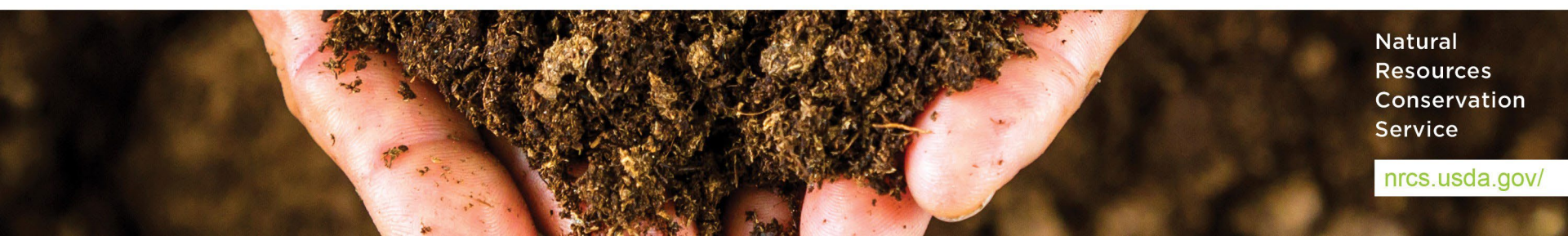


United States Department of Agriculture

Regional Conservation Partnership Program



April 19, 2022



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Webinar Goals & Objectives

- **RCPP Overview:**
- **More comprehensive “RCPP 101” training available at:**
<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/rcpp/>
- **Today’s Presentation:**
 - Highlight the differences between Classic and AFA
 - Outline RCPP conservation activities and financial approach



What is RCPP?



Co-investing in targeted, innovative natural resource solutions

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RCPP Basics



- Promotes coordination of conservation activities with partners offering value-added contributions that expand our collective ability to assist producers and support delivery of conservation benefits
- Why apply for RCPP? To direct NRCS resources to producers/landowners in a specific area for a specific set of resource concerns.
- **NOT A GRANT, more of targeted funding opportunity**



RCPP—comes in three flavors!



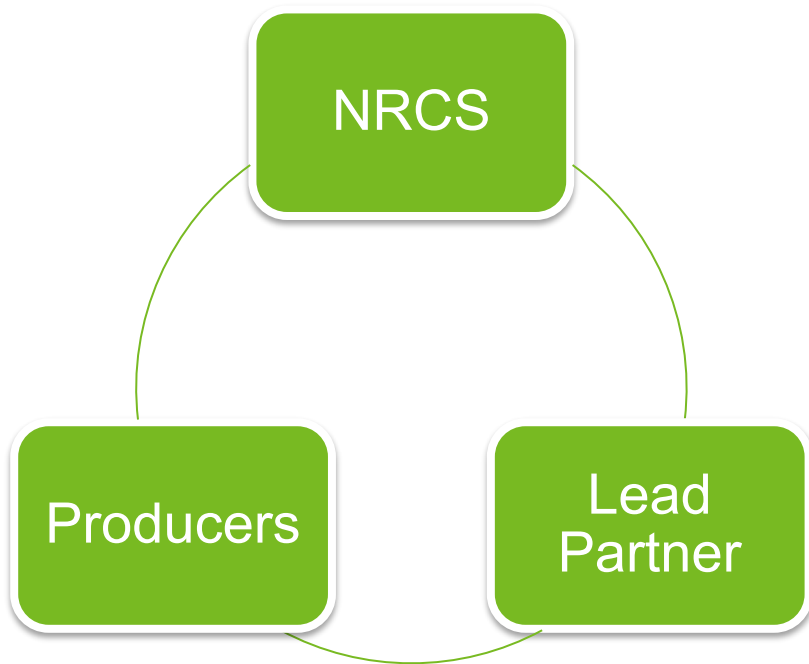
- **RCPP Classic—traditional program**
- **RCPP Alternative Funding Arrangements (AFA)—separate competition for more progressive conservation approaches and infrastructure projects**
- **RCPP Renewals—allows for streamlined renewal of successful projects**



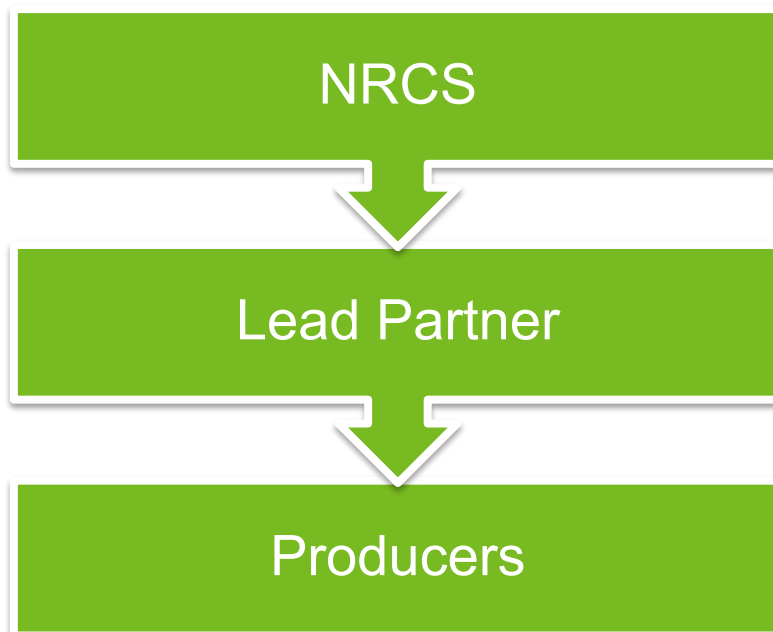
RCPP Classic vs AFAs



RCPP Classic



Alternative Funding Arrangements



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For Both AFA and Classic



- **Funding must be split 50/50 with CCA and State/Multistate pools**
- **Conservation benefits/resource concerns**
- **Significant partner contributions are critical and goal is at least 1:1**
- **Funding min (\$250k) and max (\$10M)**
- **70/30 FA/TA split is the same**
- **Eligible lead partners are the same**



Partner Eligibility



Only organizations listed in the RCPP statute can apply to be a RCPP lead partner.

- An agricultural or silvicultural producer association or other group of producers.
- A State or unit of local government.
- An Indian Tribe.
- A farmer cooperative.
- A water district, irrigation district, acequia, rural water district or association, or other organization with specific water delivery authority to agricultural producers.
- A municipal water or wastewater treatment entity.
- An institution of higher education.
- An organization or entity with an established history of working cooperatively with producers on agricultural land, as determined by NRCS, to address—
 - Local conservation priorities related to agricultural production, wildlife habitat development, or nonindustrial private forest land management; or
 - Critical watershed-scale soil erosion, water quality, sediment reduction, or other natural resource issues.
- An entity, such as an Indian Tribe, State government, local government, or a nongovernmental organization that has a farmland or grassland protection program that purchases agricultural land easements, as defined in 7 CFR Section 1468.3.
- A conservation district.



Land Eligibility



- **Private agricultural lands and non-industrial private forest lands.**
- **Public lands are possible provided ONLY where consistent with NFO**
 - A watershed/public works structure is built on public lands but benefits accrue to private lands/landowners.
 - Producer contracts that benefit entire producer operation including private and public lands.
- **AFA partners must ensure producers' farm and tract records are current with Farm Service Agency.**

RCPP—what happens in a project?

Lead partners may propose any combination of the following activities:

- **Land management**
- **Land rentals**
- **U.S.-held easements***
- **Entity-held easements**
- **Watershed/public works project**

***Classic only**



U.S.-held Easements (Classic only)

- For any eligible land use—e.g., ag land, forestland, associated wetlands and riparian areas.
- Contract between NRCS and a landowner.
- Restriction-based template deeds—Most-, Moderately- and Least Restrictive.
- Lead Partner has the opportunity to influence some (but not all) aspects of deed restrictions, at the project level.
- Partners contributions may be used to complement NRCS funding to encourage landowner participation.



Entity-held Easements



- For any eligible land use—e.g., ag land, forestland, associated wetlands and riparian areas.
- Classic funding will pay up to 50% of easement value with a U.S. right of enforcement (up to 25% without a U.S. right of enforcement).
- **AFA funding will pay up to 25% of easement value, no U.S. right of enforcement available.**
- Minimum deed terms available on the National RCPP website.



RCPP Contacts



1) State RCPP Coordinators—current list on the National How to Apply site

2) National RCPP Staff—rcpp@usda.gov





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