

The Farm Bill and North Dakota



The federal Farm Bill committed over \$177 million in 2017 to help North Dakota farmers through cost-share assistance, rental payments, easement payments, or technical assistance. That funding helped farmers be better stewards of North Dakota's land, water and soils, and it provided conservation and economic benefits throughout the state.

Working Lands – in 2017, the Conservation Stewardship Program provided \$75 million for farmers in North Dakota, and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program committed \$23 million. The funds help farmers put in place nutrient management strategies, adopt conservation practices like cover crops and conservation crop rotations, and put in place rotational grazing for livestock. *Over the past five years, 4,917 CSP and EQIP contracts have provided conservation benefits on nearly 900,000 acres of land in Michigan, about 9% of the state's farmland.*

Farmland Easements – Thousands of acres of critically important Prairie Pothole wetlands in North Dakota are now protected thanks to USDA conservation easement programs included in the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program. Because of budget cuts for easements included in the 2014 Farm Bill, the number of wetland easements protected nationwide has dropped dramatically. In 2017, \$6 million in Agricultural Conservation Easement Program funds helped North Dakota farmers enroll 4,415 acres in conservation easements to protect wetlands on farms from development.

Forestry – *Forests cover 20.3 million acres of Michigan, about 56% of the state. 9.1 million acres of that are owned by individuals or families, and 2.7 million acres are in National Forests. The Conservation Stewardship Program, Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Agricultural Conservation Easement Program and Healthy Forests Reserve Program can be used to for conservation or protection of nonindustrial private forest lands.*

Conservation Reserve Program – *over 6,000 Michigan farms have Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts, covering over 130,000 acres of land and providing almost \$17 million in annual rental payments to farmers. Over 62% of CRP acres in Michigan are high-value ('continuous signup') contracts, including over 45,000 acres of Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program acres that protect water quality by providing filter strips, buffer strips along streams, and restored wetlands. Nearly 11,000 acres are now enrolled in the CRP State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement program to restore diverse grasslands in the Lower Peninsula and provide habitat for native pollinators in Michigan. Nation-wide, about one-third of CRP acres are in special initiatives, so Michigan is doing more to target CRP acres where they will do the most good.*

Crop Insurance – *federally subsidized crop insurance provides many benefits to farmers, but current premiums don't recognize that farmers who build the health of their soil through conservation practices that reduce their risk of a crop loss. These low risk farmers deserve a 'good driver discount' that would recognize their reduced risk to the crop insurance system and encourage conservation practices.*

The Izaak Walton League of America was founded in 1922 to conserve outdoor America for future generations. The League has 230 local chapters around the country, and over 44,000 member households. The League's 54 founders, who were avid anglers, named the organization after Izaak Walton, 17th century author of The Compleat Angler, a classic book about the art and spirit of fishing. We are one of the earliest of America's conservation organizations, setting a course to defend wild America by changing public policy.