

The Farm Bill and South Dakota



NRCS

The federal Farm Bill provides \$228 million annually in conservation dollars through cost-share assistance, rent, easement payments, and technical assistance in South Dakota. That investment helps South Dakota farmers and ranchers be better stewards of the state's land, water, soils, and wildlife, and it provides conservation and economic benefits throughout South Dakota.

Working Lands – in 2018, the Conservation Stewardship Program committed nearly \$95 million to South Dakota farmers and ranchers, covering 1.5 million acres of farm and ranch land. CSP contracts help farmers improve their grazing management systems, adopt high-level Integrated Pest Management, and install wildlife-friendly fencing and other practices. The Environmental Quality Incentives Program provided \$25 million for contracts that included 382,868 acres of farm and ranch land in South Dakota. EQIP funds help farmers and ranchers put in place nutrient management plans, adopt conservation practices like cover crops and conservation crop rotations, and put in place rotational grazing systems for livestock.



Farm Bill conservation programs help farmers improve their grazing systems.

Conservation Reserve Program – About 13,540 South Dakota farms have Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts, covering over 1.1 million acres of land. The contracts provide over \$101 million in annual rental payments to farmers. Just 22% of those, 248,363 acres, are CRP General signup contracts. 12%, about 136,000 acres, are CRP Grassland contracts that protect and conserve existing grasslands vulnerable to conversion.

Dennis Larson, NRCS



The Conservation Reserve Program helps protect Prairie Pothole wetlands..

The remaining two-thirds of South Dakota CRP contracts, nearly 760,000 acres, are Continuous-signup CRP (CCRP). That includes over 100,000 acres of Farmable Wetlands Program, 164,720 acres of State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE), and 79,483 acres of Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) contracts. The CREP contracts provide pheasant habitat, water quality benefits, and public access for hunters or anglers on cropland converted to grassland.

More than 541,000 acres of South Dakota CRP acres feature wetland conservation practices, more than any other state.

Wetland and Grassland Easements – in 2018 the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program provided \$6.7 million that helped fund conservation easements on 2,970 acres in South Dakota. From 2014

to 2018, \$43 million provided funding for conservation easements on 10,144 acres of wetlands in South Dakota.

Targeted Conservation – the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) has helped target USDA conservation dollars where they will do the most good and will leverage state and private funds. In South Dakota, 5 RCPP projects meet conservation needs in different parts of the state, including conservation and protection of Prairie Pothole wetlands, conservation on Tribal lands, and water quality practices in targeted watersheds.

Izaak Walton League and South Dakota

The Izaak Walton League of America was founded in 1922 to conserve outdoor America for future generations. The League's 54 founders, all 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. The Izaak Walton League has 12 local Chapters in South Dakota, and over 1,500 active member families in the state. Our organization has been involved in agricultural policy since 1937.

Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education — the SARE program funds on-farm research, driven by farmers, to identify, test, and provide educational outreach on farming and ranching methods that reduce the use of off-farm inputs, improve productivity, and address conservation issues. Recent projects in Oregon have addressed challenges for growers of berries, broccoli, cabbage, grapes, hazelnuts, and olives, and forage for livestock producers.

Farming Opportunities Training & Outreach — The 2018 Farm Bill combined the Beginning Farmers & Ranchers Development Program and the Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers program (Section 2501) into a Farming Opportunities Training & Outreach program. Past grants have funded development of advanced training for beginning farmers and the establishment of Teaching Farms at three Oregon State University research farms.

Local Agriculture Market Program — the 2018 Farm Bill combined several USDA programs that support farmers markets, local and regional food systems, and value-added initiatives by farmers into the Local Agriculture Market Program (LAMP). Past grants in Oregon have funded a project to help five farmers markets support new farmer vendors, and helped an organic farm produce and market a new hard apple cider.

Other Conservation Programs

Conserving Wetlands — the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) funds partnerships that leverage state, federal, and private dollars to deliver wetland conservation projects. Since its inception, the program has provided \$21 million in federal funds to leverage \$81 million in partner contributions that are conserving nearly 115,000 acres of wetlands in Oregon. Another \$9 million in NAWCA grants have leveraged \$37 million in partner contributions to conserve over 58,000 acres of wetlands through 10 regional projects that include Oregon and neighboring states. Oregon has lost nearly 40% of its historic wetlands, which provide vital habitat for migrating birds and local wildlife, filter polluted runoff, recharge groundwater, and help reduce flooding.

Land & Water Conservation Fund — The Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) was established in 1964 to direct a portion of federal offshore oil and gas lease revenue into conservation projects across the nation. LWCF projects acquire, build, and maintain public parks, ballfields, and swimming pools; improve access to public land through the purchase of inholdings and easements; and support hunting and fishing access on public lands. In Oregon, more than 1,300 projects have benefitted from more than \$58 million in LWCF funding. That includes protection of Table Rocks near Medford, the East Moraine of Wallowa Lake, thousands of acres in the Columbia River Gorge, and nearly 20,000 acres of private forest surrounded by Mt. Hood National Forest.

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