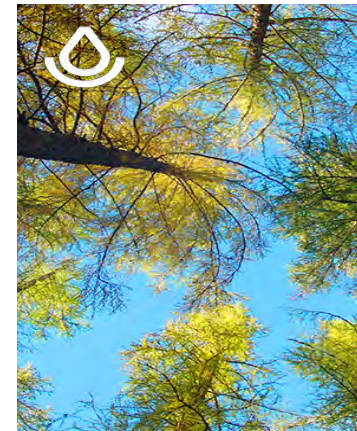




United States Department of Agriculture



NRCS Funding Sources for Your Aquatic Restoration Projects

Chris Reidy - NRCS

Maine Sustainability and Water Conference
March 31, 2023

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5 Steps to Assistance



USDA is an Equal Opportunity Provider, Employer and Lender



**NRCS 101:
14 Field Offices**

Private Landowners on Private Land

Participation is entirely voluntary

Resource Concerns

Inadequate Aquatic Habitat for Fish and Wildlife

Conservation Practices

Aquatic Organism Passage (396)

Stream Habitat Improvement and Mgt (395)

Provide TA and FA Assistance

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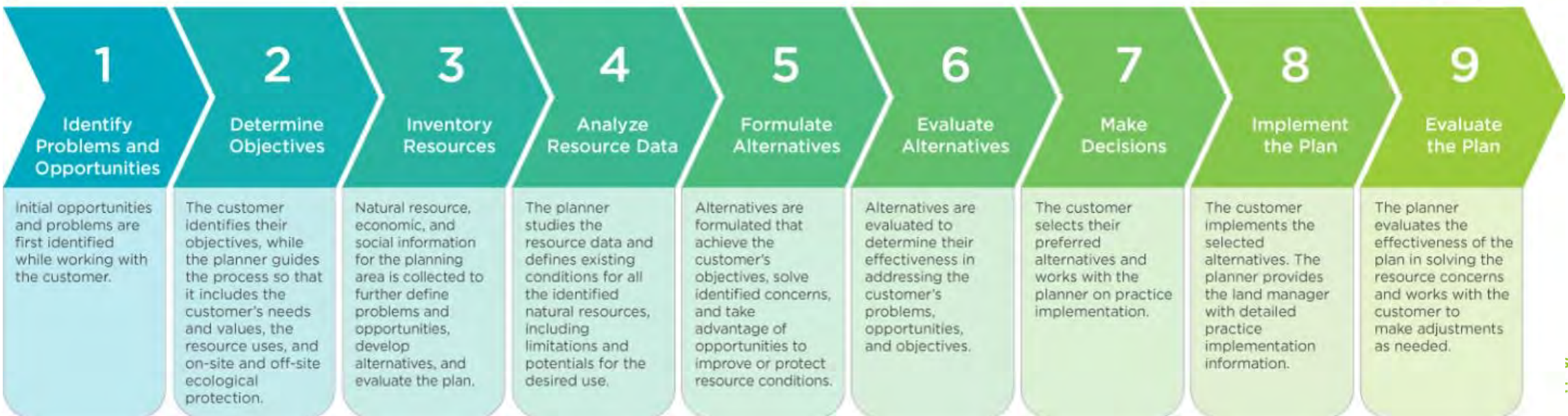
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9-Step Planning Process



HOW CONSERVATION PLANNING WORKS A NINE-STEP PROCESS

ME NRCS Aquatic Restoration Team

Team Manager - Ben Nauman

Aquatic Restoration Engineer - Heidi Bunn

Fisheries Biologist - Chris Reidy

Conservation Planner - Emily Dickison

Engineering Technician – TBD

Program Assistant - TBD



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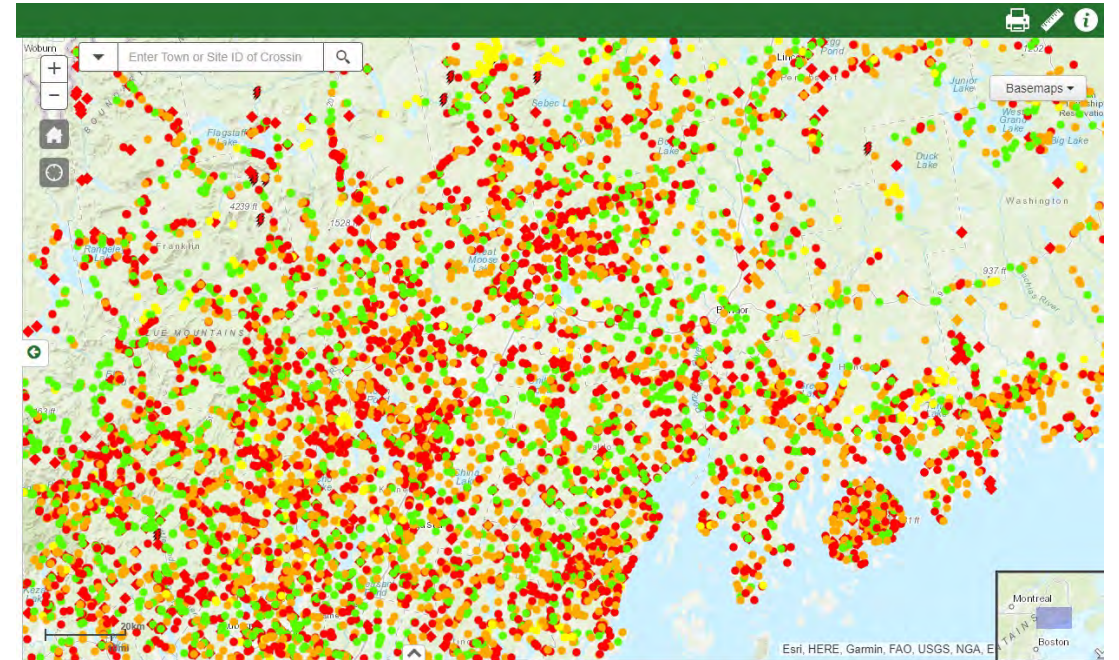
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Resource Concern - Connectivity



<https://webapps2.cgis-solutions.com/MaineStreamViewer/>



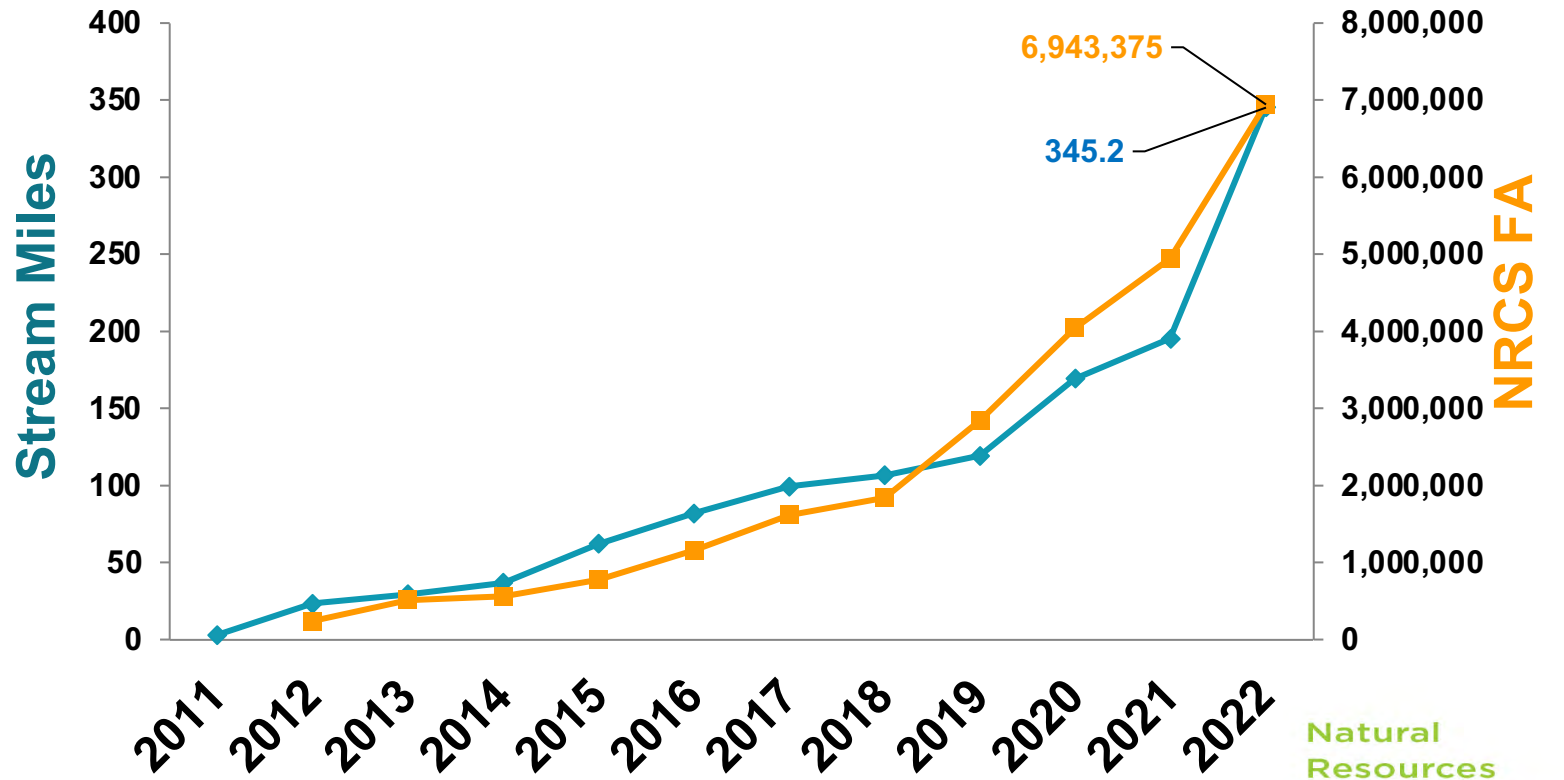
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Maine NRCS and Partner Accumulative Aquatic Organism Passage Effort



Resource Concern – Instream Habitat



Cutting riparian zones and Driving of logs

- Removed anything in the stream that would hang up logs
- Volume of water all at once from splash dams
- Logs scouring stream banks and stream bottom
- Bulldozing streams



Resource Concern - In-Stream Habitat



Baseline Condition



Post Treatment



Resource Inventory and Alternative Formulation

1. Conduct Site Visit
2. Does a Resource Concern Exist?
3. Other Considerations
4. Formulate Alternatives



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Environmental Quality Incentives Program

Voluntary financial assistance program where NRCS provides TA and FA to address resource concerns.

Eligible entities include owners and managers of land used for agricultural or forest production.

Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) limitation of \$900K.

\$450K Farm Bill payment cap



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State Aquatic Restoration EQIP Pool

Core conservation practices:

- 1. Aquatic Organism Passage (396)**
- 2. Stream Habitat Improvement and Management (395)**

Available statewide

**Forest Management Plan
Exemptions for 395 and 396**



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Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

NRCS works with partners to coordinate and leverage resources to implement projects within a defined focus area

Major program flexibilities:

Project AGI waiver

RCPP funds don't count toward Farm Bill cap

Currently have two RCPP projects specific to AOP and stream restoration activities

Working towards developing a statewide RCPP for stream restoration activities within 2 years.



Watershed Approach To Restoring Stream Systems (WATRSS) RCPP

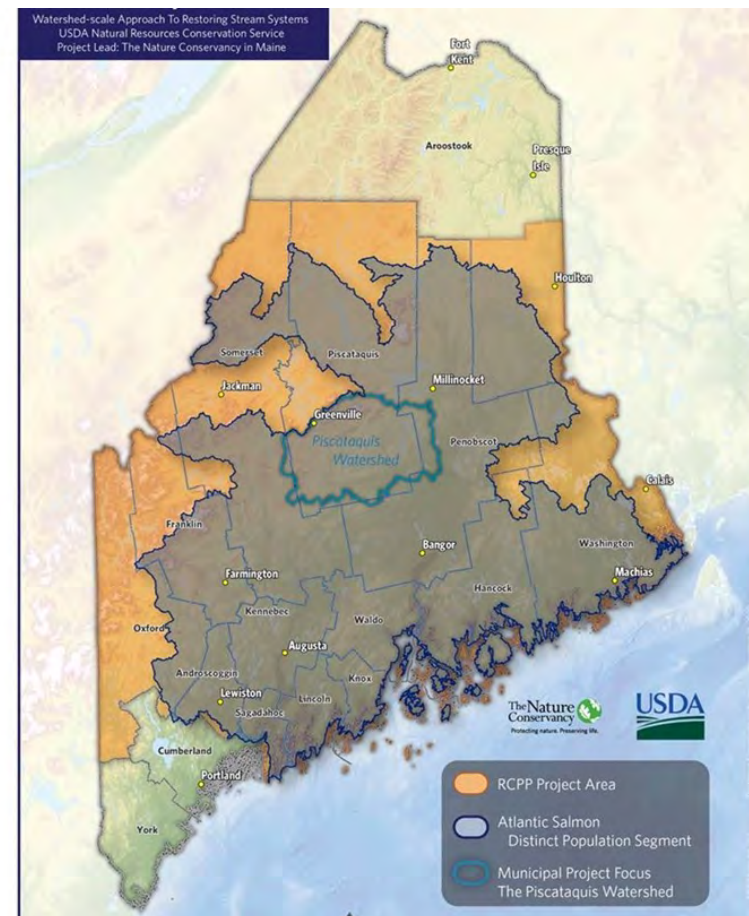
Lead Partner The Nature Conservancy

Core practice is Aquatic Organism Passage

First projects implemented last year
DPS for ATS

\$7m from NRCS

Beginning to plan for 2024 projects



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Trout Unlimited RCPP (1865)



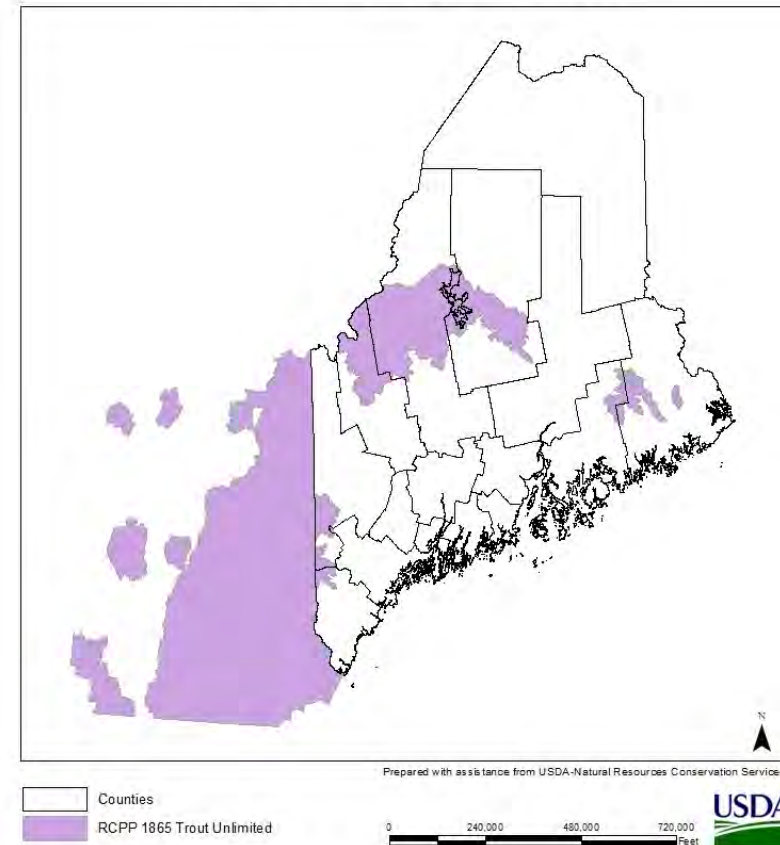
**Project area includes portions of
Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont**

Focus on large wood addition

**One project implemented in 2022
treated 1.3 miles over 3 streams**

**1.9 miles planned over five streams
in 2023**

Trout Unlimited RCPP Project Area



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Future Funding Opportunities



Inflation Reduction Act

\$19.5 Billion for Conservation Programs beginning in 2023!!!

- \$8.45 billion for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program
- \$4.95 billion for the Regional Conservation Partnership Program
- \$3.25 billion for the Conservation Stewardship Program
- \$1.4 billion for the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program
- \$1 billion for the Conservation Technical Assistance Program



Contacts

Individual Projects:

Local field offices or

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RCPP and larger scoping projects:

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