

United States Department of Agriculture



NRCS Funding Sources for Your Aquatic RestorationProjects
Chris Reidy - NRCSMaine Sustainability and Water Conference
March 31, 2023

Natural Resources Conservation Service



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 Resources

Resources Conservation Service

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9-Step Planning Process

HOW CONSERVATION PLANNING WORKS A NINE-STEP PROCESS 3 2 5 6 8 1 4 7 Analyze Make Identify Determine Formulate Evaluate Evaluate Inventory Implement Problems and Objectives **Resource Data** the Plan Resources Alternatives Alternatives Decisions the Plan Opportunities Initial opportunities The customer Natural resource. The planner Alternatives are Alternatives are The customer The customer The planner and problems are identifies their studies the formulated that evaluated to selects their implements the evaluates the economic, and first identified social information resource data and achieve the determine their preferred selected effectiveness of the objectives, while while working with the planner guides for the planning defines existing customer's effectiveness in alternatives and alternatives. The plan in solving the the customer. area is collected to conditions for all objectives, solve addressing the the process so that works with the planner provides resource concerns it includes the further define the identified identified concerns. customer's planner on practice the land manager and works with the problems and problems. implementation. with detailed customer to customer's needs natural resources. and take make adjustments and values, the opportunities, Including advantage of opportunities, practice resource uses, and develop limitations and opportunities to and objectives. implementation as needed. on-site and off-site potentials for the information. alternatives, and improve or protect ecological evaluate the plan. desired use. resource conditions. protection.

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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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Resource Concern - Connectivity 🛆 🛆 🛆 🖉 🎸



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







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





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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





State Aquatic Restoration EQIP Pool 0 0 0 0

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.



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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**







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





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



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Contacts 🛆 🛆 🛆

Individual Projects:

Local field offices or

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