



NACD has secured a \$10 million cooperative agreement with NRCS to further build and enhance conservation district technical assistance across the nation.

The Basics:

A significant portion of the funds will be awarded directly to conservation districts to hire staff where additional capacity is needed to improve customer service and reduce workload pressure.

This agreement includes:

- \$9 million for conservation planning and EQIP implementation assistance.
- \$1 million for NACD to manage the project (over a two-year plus period).
- A 25% match will be required for each agreement. Match is preferably cash, but in-kind will be considered. NACD is required overall to have a 25% match and is providing the first 5%. Districts will need to supply the remaining 20%. Most contracts will cover funding for a 1-year period.

NACD will ask state/territory conservation partnerships to identify high-priority locations for the use of these funds. Funding will be awarded in batches on an ongoing basis as proposals are received with attention to parity across the country.

NACD's priority is to get the \$9 million in the hands of conservation districts in the first and second quarter of Fiscal Year 2018 (FY18) so that they can hire employees to help carry out the objectives of this agreement. Funding assumptions are that this \$9 million would hire about 180 Full-Time Equivalents (FTE's). Some will likely be part-time and/or multi-district.

NACD plans for some contractor assistance for region representatives and to provide additional capacity and assistance in coordination/communication with state partners.

Initial Implementation Steps:

- August 29, alert NACD board
- September 11 and 27, brief all NACD staff via teleconferences
- September 28, distribute briefing materials and project FAQs
- October 4, hold national teleconference with NACD Board/Staff, State/Territory Contacts
- State/territory partnerships begin determining workload priorities and conservation district participants, regional teleconferences scheduled
- In October, add contractor capacity for NACD
- Secure final approval on plan of work, timeline, and reporting metrics
- November 1, prepare announcement for the project; distribute to all state and territory partners
- Goal is to have all funds (\$9m) transferred to conservation districts and engaged in hiring by March 31, 2018