



Getting the Job Done

NACD Technical Assistance Grants: A summary of year one activity



Conservation Districts Get The Job Done

There is nothing more fulfilling after a long day's work on the farm than finally getting the job done – you've set out to do something, and you've done it.

As current and former presidents of the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD), we've seen both on a local and national level the need for additional capacity.

As landowners and conservation district officials in New Mexico and Iowa, we've seen first-hand for years the need to bolster our conservation delivery system with additional staff support. It's a need that's consistently identified from coast to coast: conservation is a big job, and the more hands that can help deliver it, the better. It's been an honor throughout both of our terms in office to help facilitate the agreements in cooperation with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) that ultimately put more boots on the ground to help implement locally-led conservation.

Our strength, as individual conservation districts and as a national organization, lies within our partnerships. It's the underlying force that drives locally-led conservation – neighbors helping neighbors. NRCS and conservation districts have a close relationship built on trust in its partnerships, so when NACD and NRCS decided

to join forces to award these technical assistance grants for the first time in late 2017, we knew the investment would pay off. The technical assistance grants program has continued to strengthen and expand, allowing for a second round of funding in early 2019 to continue and further the work of conservation districts on America's landscapes.

We're thrilled with the work conservation districts have accomplished through our recent technical assistance grants. The effort has increased local capacity, allowing for the completion of Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) contracts and the development of new conservation planning. It has helped enhance customer service, address administrative backlogs and streamline conservation services. The technical assistance grants program has helped to provide additional capacity in underserved areas, including a number of tribal conservation districts. This grant program is helping more work to get done across the country.

This booklet is intended to highlight much of the work performed over the course of the first year of technical assistance grants. It's only a glimpse into what our conservation districts have been up to, but the results are encouraging, and we're proud to share them with you.

America's conservation districts are helping to bring conservation practices to landowners quicker, in greater volume, and on more diverse landscapes than ever before. The impacts are both immediate and long-lasting.

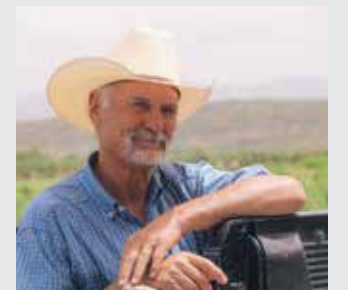
This effort has transcended both of our presidencies with NACD, and it's an initiative that can continue well into the future.

There is more work to be done. We're equipped and ready for it.

Tim Palmer
Brent Van Dyke



Tim Palmer
President



Brent Van Dyke
Past President

“America's conservation districts are helping to bring conservation practices to landowners quicker, in greater volume, and on more diverse landscapes than ever before. The impacts are both immediate and long-lasting.”



NACD's mission is to promote the wise and responsible use of natural resources for all lands by representing locally-led conservation districts and their associations through grassroots advocacy, education and partnerships.

The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) is the 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that represents America's nearly 3,000 conservation districts, their state/territory associations, and the more than 17,000 men and women who serve on their governing boards.

Conservation districts are local units of government established under state law to carry out natural resource management programs at the local level. Districts work with millions of cooperating landowners and operators to help them manage and protect land and water resources on private and public lands in the United States.



ABOUT NACD



The association was founded on the philosophy that conservation decisions should be made at the local level with technical and funding assistance from federal, state and local governments and the private sector. As the national voice for all conservation districts, NACD supports voluntary, incentive-driven natural resource conservation programs that benefit all citizens.

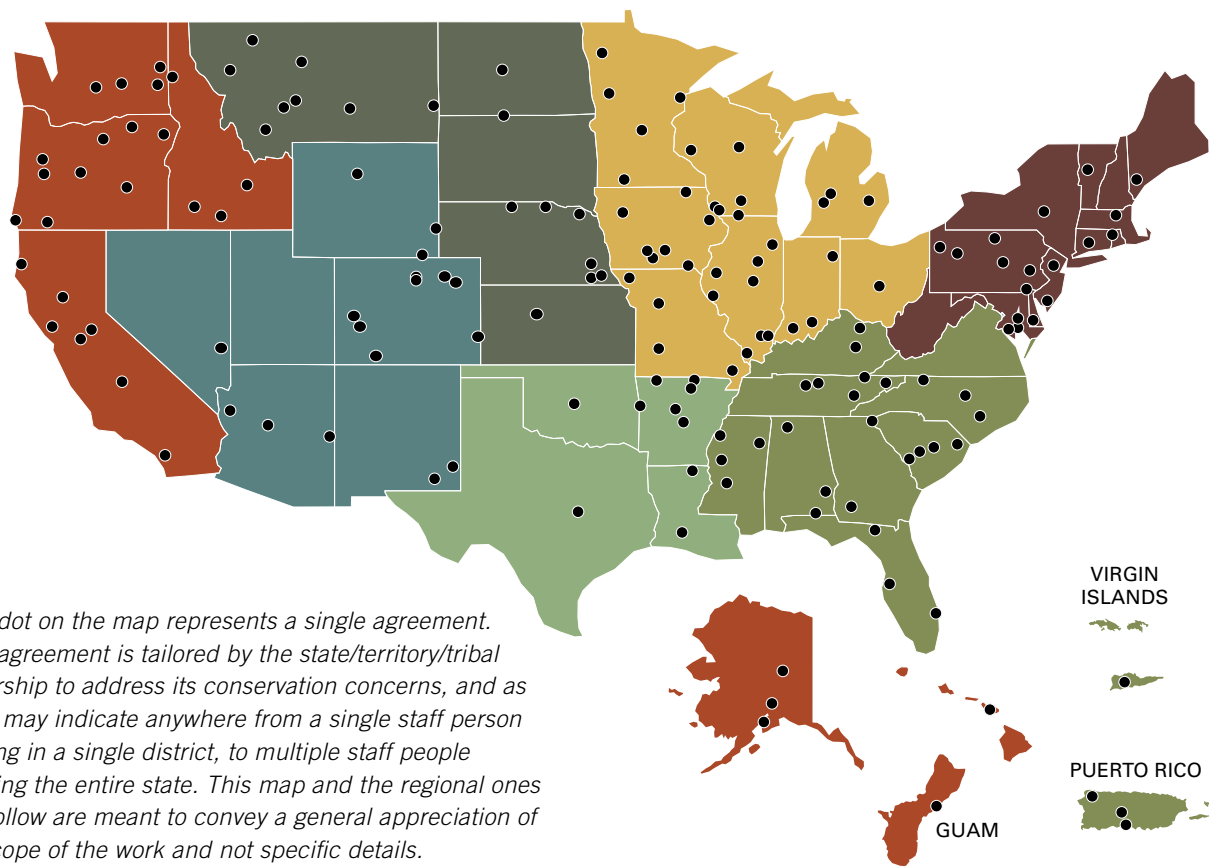
NACD maintains relationships with organizations and government agencies; publishes information about districts; works with leaders in agriculture, conservation, environment, education, industry and other fields; and provides services to its member districts and state/territory associations.

The association's programs and activities aim to advance conservation led by local districts and the millions of cooperating landowners and land managers they serve.

NACD is governed by a board of directors, consisting of an elected representative from each state and territory; and an executive board, consisting of a regional representative from each of NACD's seven geographic regions and an elected officer team. All NACD executive board positions require the leader to be an official with their local conservation district. Each year, NACD's board of directors helps set the grassroots policy that guides the national association.



ABOUT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS



Each dot on the map represents a single agreement. Each agreement is tailored by the state/territory/tribal leadership to address its conservation concerns, and as such, may indicate anywhere from a single staff person working in a single district, to multiple staff people covering the entire state. This map and the regional ones that follow are meant to convey a general appreciation of the scope of the work and not specific details.

\$9 million for conservation planning and Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) implementation assistance



In 2017, NACD entered into the first of a series of cooperative agreements with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to provide funding to further enhance conservation district technical assistance across the nation. The agreement specified that the funds would be awarded to conservation districts to hire staff where additional capacity is needed to improve customer service and reduce workload pressure. The priorities were established from national workload databases and the decisions of the state/territory conservation partnership leaders.

The 2017 technical assistance cooperative agreement of \$10 million included:

- **\$7,200,000 allocated as grants to hire local district/state agency/state association/RC&D/tribal employees to assist landowners in implementing EQIP contracts.**
- **\$1,800,000 allocated as grants to agencies to expand capacity to provide conservation planning assistance (COTA).**
- **Nearly 10 percent or \$1 million of these funds would be used by NACD to manage the project over the three-year period of the agreement.**
- **The requirement for match of 25 percent, of which NACD would provide the first 5 percent. Grant recipients would supply the remaining 20 percent.**
- **There were two additional deliverables included for a total of \$175,000: one to develop a web application and one to develop a state pilot leadership program.**

To ensure that the funds were directed to areas where they would have the highest impact, NACD worked with state and territory conservation partnerships to identify the highest priority locations. Those locations were identified based on immediate conservation needs, EQIP workload and staffing requirements given those workloads.

The agreement’s priority was to get the funds in the hands of conservation districts so they can hire employees to help carry out the objectives. Nationally, nearly 150 full-time and 90 part-time staff positions were created using the funds. Some positions were filled by contractors and some covered multiple districts.

The first technical assistance grants funded the positions for one year and subsequent grants have allowed many of the positions to be extended beyond. The program has been highly successful at meeting the intention of the agreement as well as sparking added benefits to many of the conservation districts.

1930

1935

1940

1946

1950

1960

1967

1970

1980

1988

1990

1992

2000

2010

2017

2020

National legislation creates the USDA Soil Conservation Service, later renamed the Natural Resources Conservation Service

A national association is formed to represent the interests of America's conservation districts

The National Association of State Conservation Agencies (NASCA) is established

The National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils (NARC&DC) is created

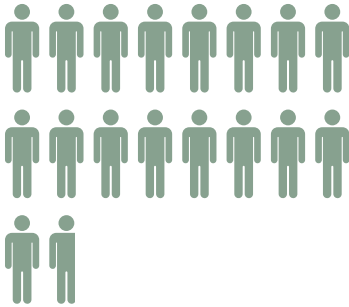
The National Conservation District Employees Association (NCDEA) is established

NACD and NRCS establish a technical assistance grant program

Northeast

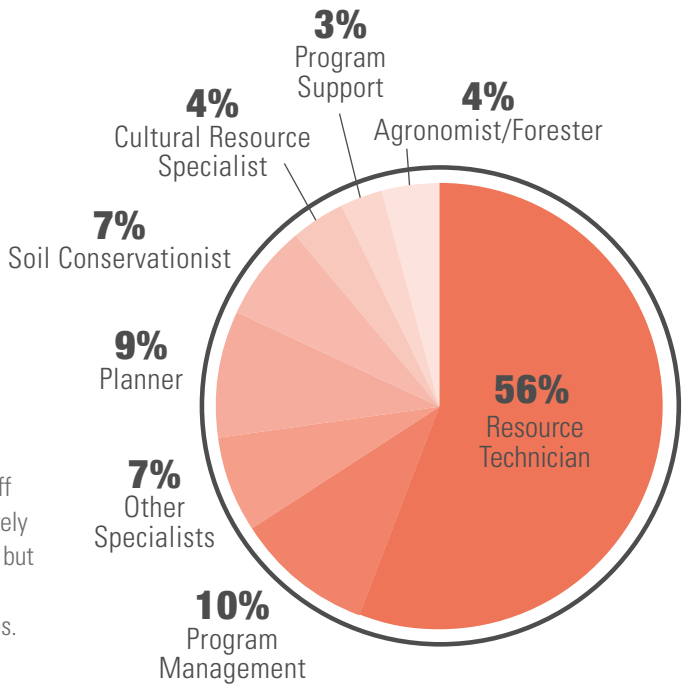
Northeast states had the highest percentage of conservation planning staff, 23 percent, among all NACD regions.

Total FTE Staff: 17.7



Staff Titles

TA grant supported staff work under approximately 100 different job titles, but they can be sorted into eight general categories.



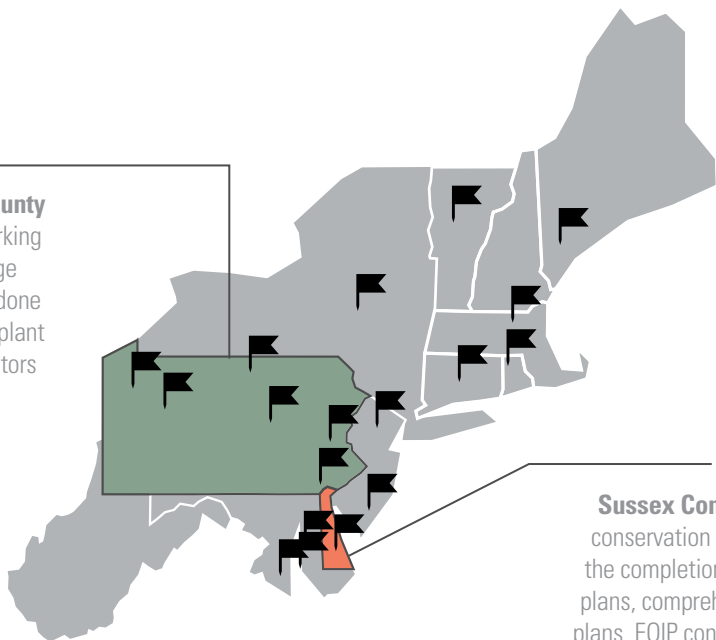
“Through the technical assistance grants, we (both the districts and NRCS) have been able to put more conservation on the ground and start to get ahead of the backlog. Our hires have increased our capacity and will be with us beyond the grant term.”

Dick Went, Past President, Rhode Island Association of Conservation Districts



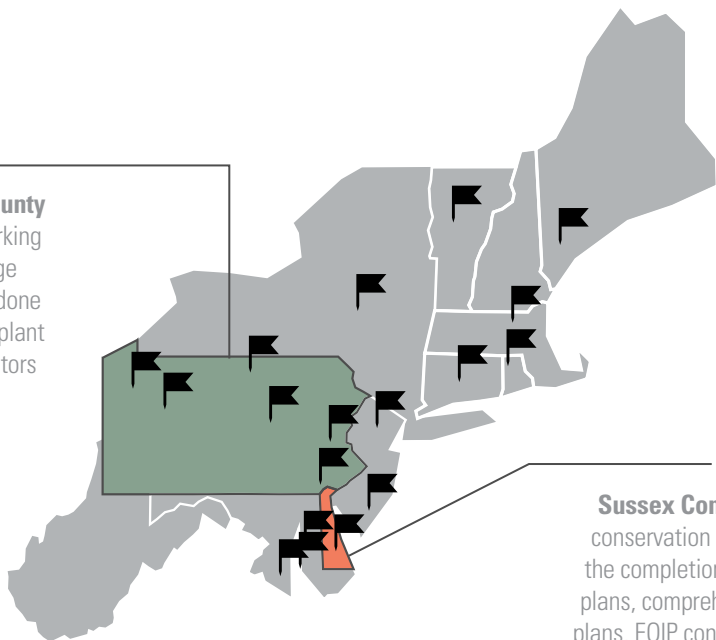
Pennsylvania

Grant funding allowed **Jefferson County Conservation District** to begin working with local landowners to encourage pollinator habitat. Inspections were done to verify the establishment of native plant species that are beneficial to pollinators such as bees and butterflies.



Delaware

Sussex Conservation District hired a conservation planner to assist NRCS with the completion of whole farm conservation plans, comprehensive nutrient management plans, EQIP contracts, and conduct soil health evaluations around the county.



SUCCESS STORY

Filling the gaps in Vermont

Vermont Association of Conservation Districts (VACD) is using an NACD technical assistance grant to help streamline NRCS contracting processes and free up conservationists to get back into the field. VACD hired program assistants to work in three of four NRCS Vermont regions to support the state’s soil conservationists and planners.

“Filling that gap enabled NRCS and VACD to increase the quantity and quality of our technical assistance,” VACD Executive Director **Jill Arace said.**

VACD and local conservation districts employ more than 20 full- and part-time staff who support NRCS programs and serve Vermont’s agricultural producers, including conservation planners, wetlands specialists, cartographic technicians, program assistants and technical specialists. Recently, NRCS and VACD conducted a continuous process improvement workshop to look at ways to best utilize VACD staff resources to achieve shared conservation goals. The week-long work session identified the need to review workflow and the roles and responsibilities of VACD and NRCS staff in Vermont’s 10 field offices.

“We realized technical staff were spending too much time on contracting and administrative

tasks, which limited the time they could spend in the field providing technical assistance, developing new projects, and monitoring and following up on NRCS-funded practices,” **Arace said.** “Having more program assistants has helped streamline the process and reduce the number of modifications required.”

“Soil conservationists and conservation planners are not spending their time glued to their desks filling out forms. And that’s not what they’re good at, while it’s what program assistants do well.”

One goal identified during the workshop was to increase follow-up on nutrient management plan implementation, something critical in Vermont because of its unique landscape characteristics, short growing season, relatively large number of dairy and other livestock operations, and strict water quality requirements. With additional program assistants, paperwork is flowing and essential follow-up is getting done.

“The districts complement our workforce and have a unique relationship with growers in our communities. The program assistants allow us to get our contracts managed in a way that enables our technical staff to get back out in the field,” NRCS Vermont State Conservationist **Vicky Drew said.**

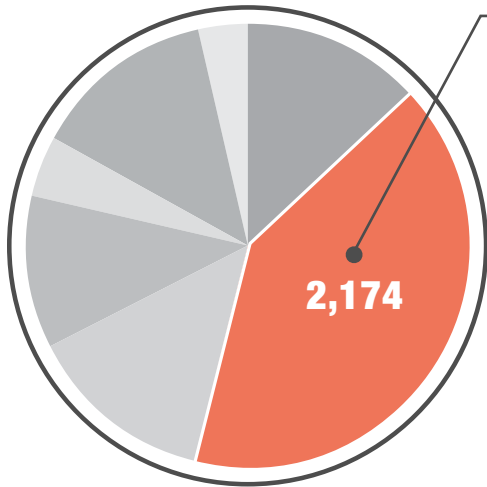
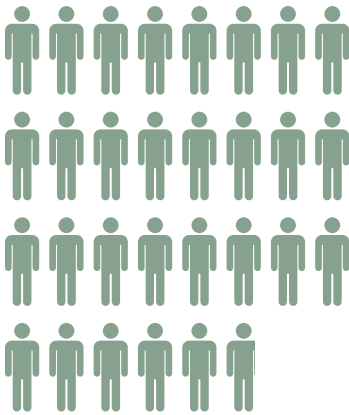


VACD and NRCS Vermont staff discussed field office workflow during a week-long workshop aimed at increasing conservation implementation and improving customer service.

Southeast

Southeast states serviced 2,174 EQIP contracts in year one of this grant, with Mississippi and Puerto Rico accounting for more than 500 contracts each.

Total FTE Staff: 29.9

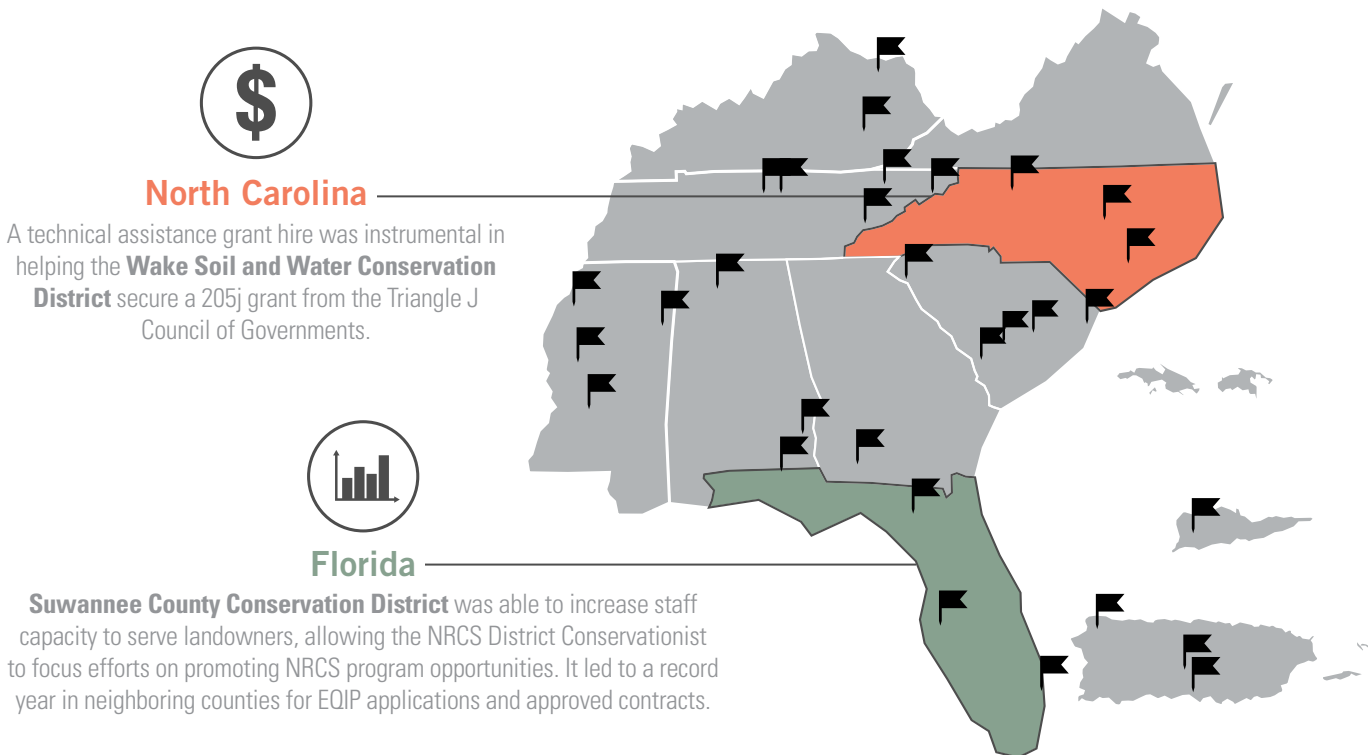


Number of Contracts
The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides financial and technical assistance to producers to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits. Each contract noted here addresses one or more practices that the producer has agreed to add to their operation.



“Through this program, we were able to add staff that support the reorganization of all the conservation districts around the island and work in long-time unfinished projects. I’m grateful the opportunity was there for us.”

Joel R. Vega, President, Puerto Rico Association of Conservation Districts



SUCCESS STORY

Leveraging funding to multiply the local impact

Tennessee’s **Blount County Soil and Water Conservation District** (SWCD) has combined its NACD technical assistance grant with a 58 percent match from the county to create a watershed coordinator position, a slot that SWCD Director of Conservation **Erich Henry** said is vital to the district’s work.

“Without the NACD grant, I doubt we could have launched this position, as grant-acquired funding for technical expertise is limited,” **Henry said.** “It took me 14 years to create the position, which in my opinion is critical to the long-term viability of natural resource programming for this county.”

A few years ago, Henry restructured the district to better align personnel with programming, services and projects, allowing Blount County to make a financial commitment to the position and the programs that derive from it. But county funding only allowed for a part-time post; the NACD grant bumped that to full-time. The district is now exploring ways to leverage funds in the hopes of making the position permanent and not grant-dependent.

Watershed coordinator **Julie Konkel** was hired with the first round of funding. She brings experience from nonprofit agency work, land management, and research she conducted as part of her doctorate. Dr. Konkel is using that experience to implement programs within the community, including workshops, on-site demonstrations, and development and maintenance of an outdoor classroom for neighboring schools.

“What I do is try to marry the science with on-the-ground application with the management that is going on,” **she said.** “I can’t manage all the land, so it comes down to the clients who are the stakeholders to manage the property. Getting information out is a big part of my job.”

The outdoor classroom includes an enhanced wetland constructed to address stormwater issues and was developed to complement school curriculum, which serves a high percentage of the school district’s underprivileged students.

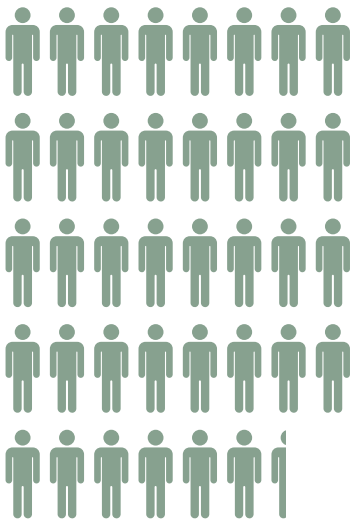
“Julie and the conservation district have done so much to help us make areas of our school yard more accessible to all of our student population for outdoor learning,” Eagleton Middle School science teacher **Amanda Hendricks said.**



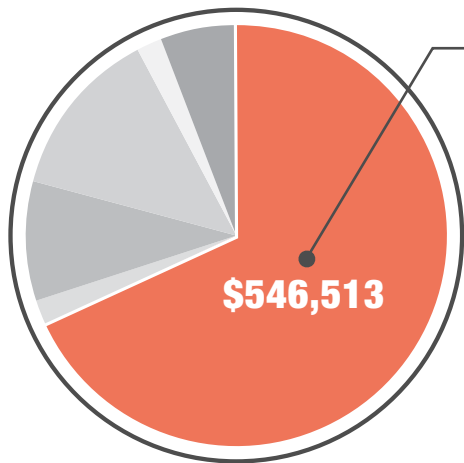
Blount County SWCD watershed coordinator Julie Konkel has helped expand conservation education efforts.

North Central

Total FTE Staff: 38.4



North Central states supplied 29 cents for each 71 cents the grant spent for a total match of more than a half-million dollars. Of that total, Wisconsin led the way with \$183,851 of match.



Round 1 Match Provided

All TA grants require the local organization to provide a minimum of 20 cents with every 80 cents the grant spends. The match comes from the local district, or any organizations within their conservation partnership, with the exception of NRCS. Many of the grantees have supplied match well over the minimum.



“Through NACD support, our district has increased EQIP applications by five times, compared to years previous.”

Jessie Schulte, District Manager, Kent Conservation District (Michigan)



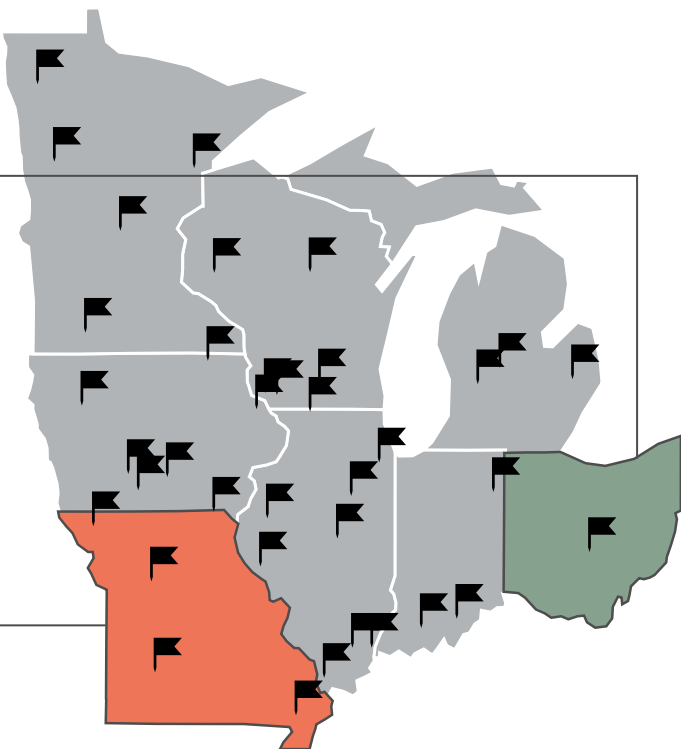
Ohio

Due to budget constraints, **Brown County Soil and Water Conservation District's** (SWCD) Chris Rogers was satisfying the dual role of district manager and conservation technician. Technical assistance grant funding allowed the district to hire an environmental engineering technologies graduate who had interned with neighboring **Clermont County SWCD**. “It’s allowing the district to move forward in fulfilling our mission,” **Rogers said**.



Missouri

Nodaway County Soil and Water Conservation District used funding to assist NRCS staff with several years’ backlog of farm reconstitutions and HEL/Wetland determinations.



SUCCESS STORY

State partnership helps Minnesota ‘mobilize’ quickly

Four state organizations in Minnesota are working together to ensure federal grant dollars are going to the areas with the highest workloads and most limited staff capacity, making the process of prioritizing NACD technical assistance grants seamless.

Agency leadership meets monthly to talk about project overlap, joint efforts and opportunities, challenges, and what can be done to work more efficiently.

“Meeting on a monthly basis lays the foundation for all we do as a partnership,” Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) Executive Director **LeAnn Buck said**. “When various opportunities arise, similar to the NACD grant opportunity, we are able to mobilize quickly because the working relationship has already been established.”

Minnesota’s Conservation Delivery Partnership, which includes leaders from the Minnesota Association of Conservation District Employees, Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), MASWCD and Natural Resources Conservation Service, has been working together

for years to address technical training and certification needs throughout the state.

The partnership secured a grant to hire a neutral party, then met to identify each agency’s needs, strengths and missions. They formed a renewed commitment for technical training, providing resources and leadership to achieve program goals in all agencies, including every conservation district in the state.

“Even though we have our own objectives, the state partnership has a common goal,” BWSR Executive Director **John Jaschke said**. “By working together, we’re able to take on more and ensure services are enhanced for the benefit of all.”

In Minnesota, each conservation district belongs to one of eight technical service areas, a group of districts that work together. In cases like the NACD grants, one district can take the lead and put in a grant that may include multiple-district projects.

“Our partnership met and ranked the projects,” **Buck said**. “Because we had the foundational expertise it was easier. And because we had front-end expectations at a state level, it helped really to zero in on where we could be most efficient with the funds.”



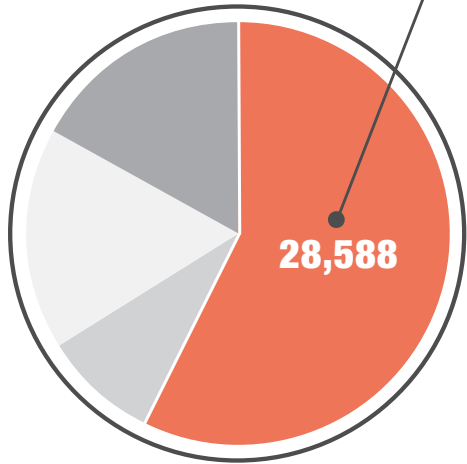
“When various opportunities arise... we are able to mobilize quickly because the working relationship has already been established.”

MASWCD Executive Director
LeAnn Buck

South Central

South Central states impacted 28,588 acres managed by underserved landowners, much of that land managed in Arkansas.

Total FTE Staff: 12.4



Acres benefited (underserved)
Historically Underserved Farmers and Ranchers is a voluntary program that offers incentives and helps to ensure equity access to USDA programs and services.



“The NACD grant enabled five Texas SWCDs to increase their technical assistance through conservation planning and implementation. Without this assistance, none of the work being completed on private land would have been possible.”

Wesley Gibson, Project Manager, Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board



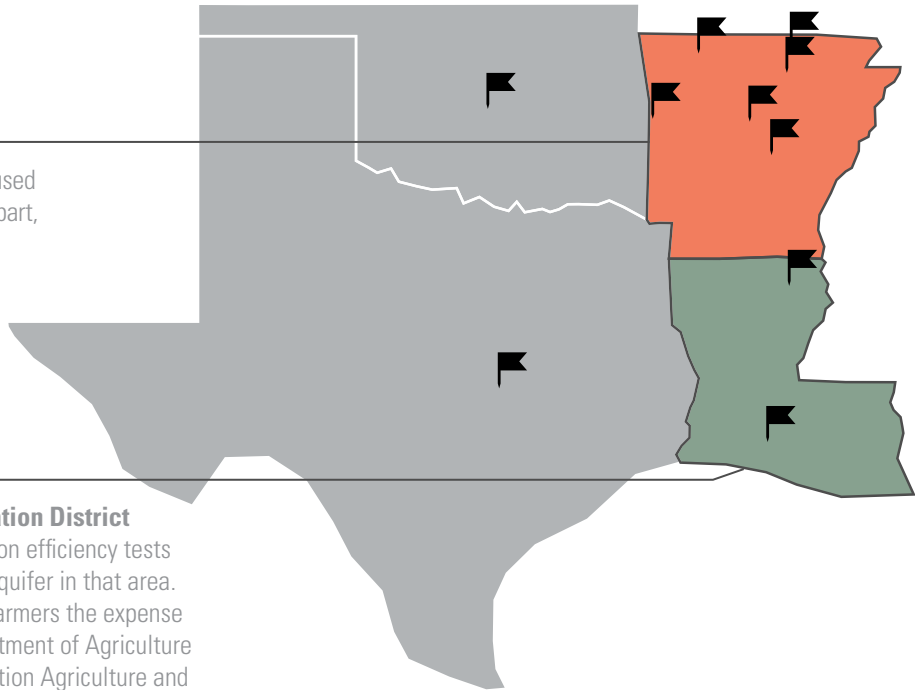
Arkansas

Arkansas conservation districts have used technical assistance grant funding, in part, to help address growing issues related to feral swine.



Louisiana

Morehouse Soil and Water Conservation District hired two college students to conduct irrigation efficiency tests and monitor irrigation water demand on the aquifer in that area. “The work is saving groundwater and saving farmers the expense of additional energy and fuel,” Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry Office of Soil and Water Conservation Agriculture and Environmental Specialist **Joey Breaux said.**



SUCCESS STORY

Students gain extraordinary experience, help trim the workload

Oklahoma University (OU) students are gaining field and program experience through an NACD technical assistance grant that helps conservation professionals develop archaeological and cultural resource records prior to ground-disturbing projects.

In Oklahoma, when a project crosses the field office desk, a three-page review including detailed project descriptions, aerial views and topographical maps is required. **Oklahoma County Conservation District** secured a technical assistance grant to hire three OU archaeology students to compile those reports for each township, range and section, which sometimes amount to 60 reports a week.

“They’ve been an immense help,” Oklahoma NRCS Archaeologist **K.C. Kraft said.** “There was a bottleneck when I was doing it by myself. As archaeologists, we want to fulfill our roles protecting natural resources out on the ground as well as identifying, protecting and preserving the

state’s cultural resources. They’ve streamlined our process.” The opportunity has provided students with real-world experience not easily obtainable in their career. Kraft plans to take the students out into the field and will have them write an academic article to be published.

“I’m trying to train them to be well-rounded archaeologists,” **he said.** “Having worked with them for two years, I kind of know their strong points and have tried to encourage them on which direction they should go. It’s great experience for them.”

“I find it fulfilling to know that I am not only protecting natural resources, but also helping local communities with this work,” OU student **Taylor Emery said.**

New Mexico also hired two archaeology staff with help from NACD technical assistance grant funding, and in Arkansas, an archaeologist has traveled statewide to help get surveys and reviews implemented so landowners can move forward with their EQIP contracts.

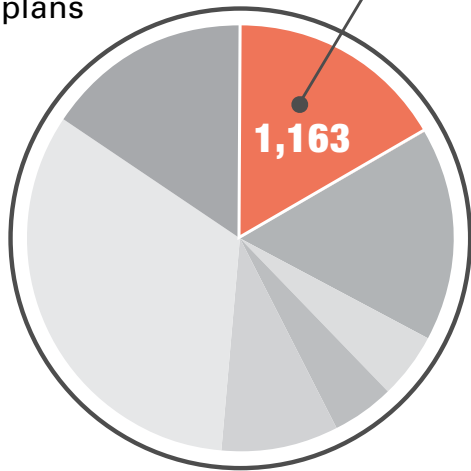
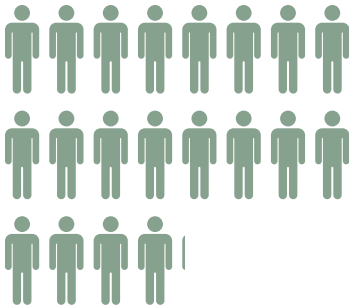


Oklahoma University graduate students were hired with grant funding to assist NRCS staff with cultural resource technical work.

Northern Plains

Northern Plains states helped develop 1,163 conservation plans in year one, second only to the Southeast among NACD regions. Kansas conservation districts were responsible for 72 percent of the plans in the region.

Total FTE Staff: 20.1



Number of COTA plans

Conservation plans can be developed on a range of scales. It could be for an individual on their operation or be used to address state-wide issues. A client's plan produces an improvement guide while considering the ecological, economic and social concerns.



“The program has allowed us to add much needed technical assistance in understaffed service areas. This greatly improved our customer service to producers in these counties. This grant has been a great resource for us.”

Dan Meyerhoff, Executive Director, Kansas Association of Conservation Districts



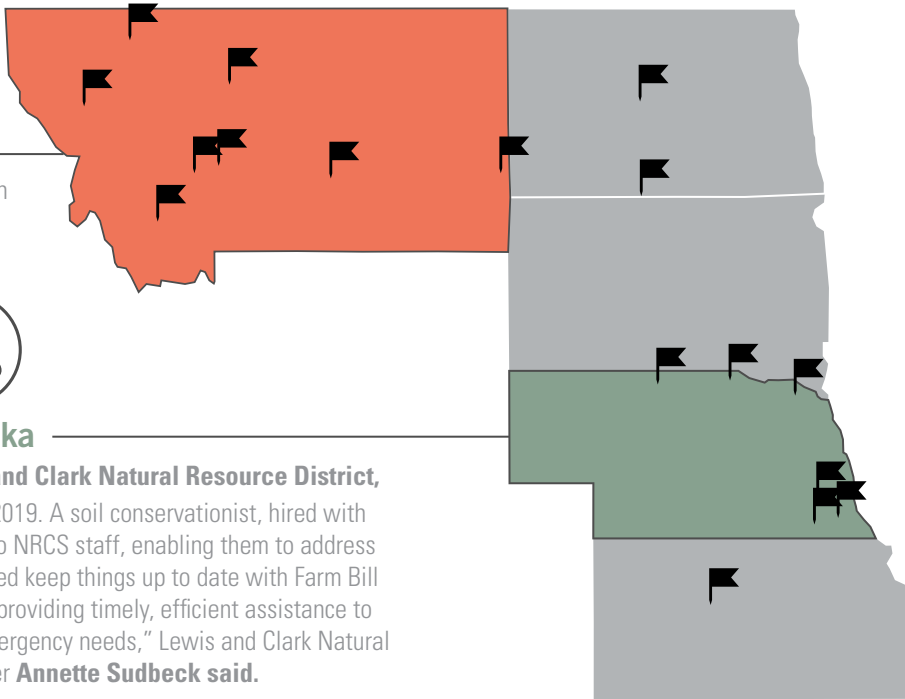
Montana

An agreement with Indian Nations Conservation Alliance (INCA) provided three positions, one each for three tribal conservation districts.



Nebraska

Much of Nebraska, including areas of **Lewis and Clark Natural Resource District**, experienced an extreme flood event in early 2019. A soil conservationist, hired with technical assistance funds, provided support to NRCS staff, enabling them to address emergency conservation needs while she helped keep things up to date with Farm Bill programs. “This position has been critical for providing timely, efficient assistance to cooperators when staff are busy addressing emergency needs,” Lewis and Clark Natural Resource District General Manager **Annette Sudbeck said.**



SUCCESS STORY

Building better relations for future conservation work

Blackfeet Nation, among the tribes which comprise 10 percent of Montana’s land, is using its NACD technical assistance grant to develop an agriculture resource management plan (ARMP) and find ways to expand the relationship between the tribe and natural resource agencies.

Year one funding focused on developing the ARMP, which will guide conservation and management practices and regulations on the land. According to Blackfeet ARMP Project Manager **Loren BirdRattler**, a second round of funding will include training and credentialing tribal members in order to hire a district conservationist, as well as work closer with NRCS on impacting tribal members’ eligibility as it relates to the complexities of the tribe’s land trust rules and function.

“As we look at the ability to move people into using both public resources and private resources, we’ve gone after funds that allow us to accomplish both because of those jurisdictional complexities that prohibit participation in different ways, and in accessing USDA resources,” **BirdRattler said.**

For example, he said, an EQIP contract goes for five years, but because most tribal land contracts are five years, a farmer or rancher may wind up ineligible unless the application is awarded right when the lease begins.

Tribal land has permission and permitting requirements that other types of landowners may not encounter, and learning about and finding ways to address those challenges is part of the funding effort, NRCS District Conservationist **Stacy Eneboe said.**

“Loren’s been doing a lot of outreach, and I know there’s a lot more awareness of the processes,” **Eneboe said.** “We try really hard to work together so we’re helping producers through that to streamline the process.”

BirdRattler also plans to use funding to get tribal members hired into conservation district and soil conservationist positions to increase program participation. “To come up with the best management practices that take advantage of the practice of who we are as Blackfeet people ... and the best of western science to create methodology and management practices conducive to our area and our farmers and ranchers,” **he said.**

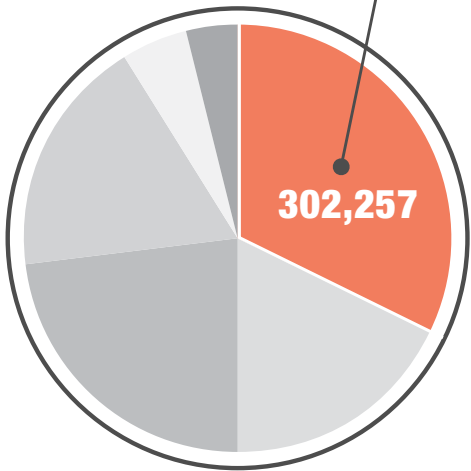


With help from grant funding, an agriculture resource management plan will guide conservation and management practices and regulations on the land. Photo credit: Joseph Pecora Photography.

Southwest

Southwest states impacted 302,257 acres with contract work satisfied in year one of this grant program. Arizona conservation districts were responsible for 65 percent of that figure.

Total FTE Staff: 12.5



Acres benefited (contracts)

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides financial and technical assistance to producers to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits. Acres noted here are operated by a client who added one or more practices to address these concerns.



“The NACD technical assistance grant program has added much needed support to many of our field offices that have experienced prolonged staff vacancies.”

Cindy Lair, Program Manager, Colorado State Conservation Board



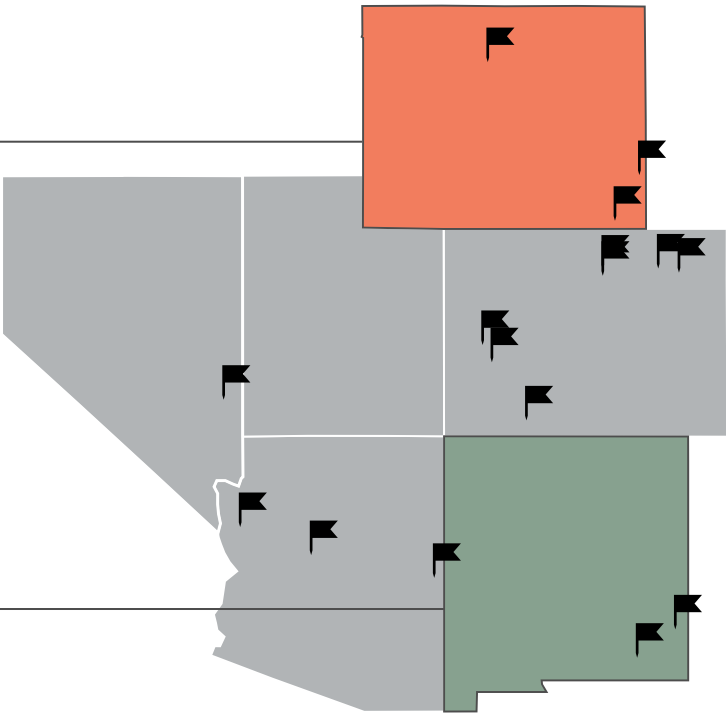
Wyoming

The **Popo Agie Conservation District** used technical assistance grant funding to contract engineering for six RCPP streambank restoration projects in partnership with NRCS and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. “The funding was essential for us to complete engineering and keep our partnership projects on schedule,” District Manager **Kelsey Beck said**. Funding from this grant will be used along with \$40,000 match from the Healthy Rivers Initiative to continue working on improving water quality and water quantity in the Popo Agie watershed.



New Mexico

Funding enabled New Mexico conservation districts to invest more resources to assist historically underserved ranchers that have federal land grazing permits.



SUCCESS STORY

Colorado district helping restore area forestland

Colorado’s **Big Thompson Conservation District** is using an NACD technical assistance grant to grow its Healthy Forest Initiative program with new staff and new projects.

The grant allowed the district to hire **Matthew Marshall** in 2018 as a full-time forester to serve Larimer and Weld Counties. By focusing on forest management that will provide a multi-resource benefit, Marshall has identified forestry projects that can carry the district into 2023.

“Ecological restoration is the key to returning Colorado’s forest to a healthy, resilient and functional state,” **Marshall said**. “By returning forest densities back to historical reference conditions, we are able to increase understory plant productivity, improve wildlife habitat, and mitigate adverse effects from severe wildfire, such as decreased water quality and soil health.”

In the past three years of implementing the initiative, about 610 acres have been treated and

another 290 have been contracted for completion in spring 2020. With Marshall, Big Thompson Conversation District hopes to treat 400-500 acres per year.

“We’re starting to put a collaboration together with the state and federal agencies,” former Big Thompson Conversation District Manager **Larry Lempka said**.

The district has aligned with partners like The Nature Conservancy, Colorado State Forest Service, Northern Colorado Water Conservancy, various watershed groups, as well as the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the U.S. Forest Service.

Marshall has also visited colleges, high schools and elementary schools in the area to educate students on the benefits of bringing forests back to natural conditions.

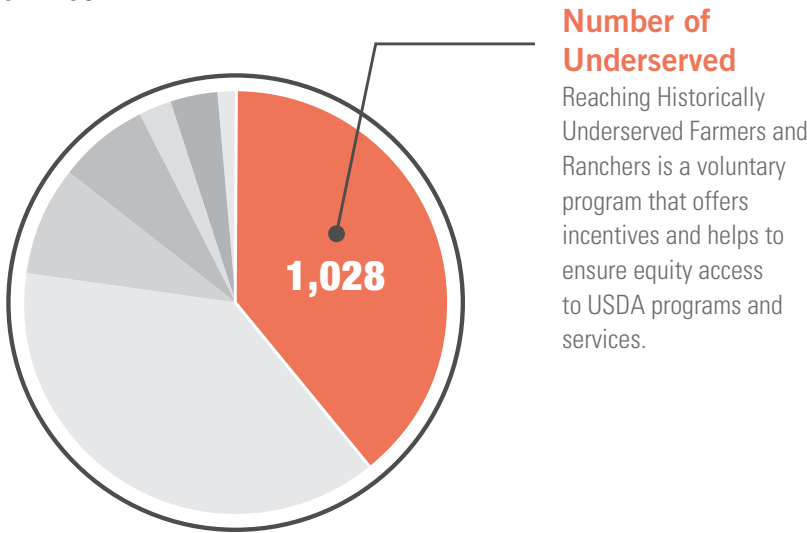
“If it weren’t for NACD and this technical assistance grant, we would not have been able to grow the district and fund other programs and events,” **Lempka said**.



The work pictured was completed on the Cheley Colorado Camps property, located in the southern Estes Valley. By removing high volumes of encroaching lodgepole pine and douglas fir, the district will reestablish the ponderosa pine forest that was present before the modern fire-suppression era.

Pacific states reached 1,028 underserved landowners through the NACD technical assistance grant program, with Idaho and Alaska accounting for 87 percent of those contacts.

Total FTE Staff: 13.6



“It was a very easy process to utilize, and it helped us get our workload done so we could get more stewardship on the ground.”

Randy White, District Manager, Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District (Oregon)



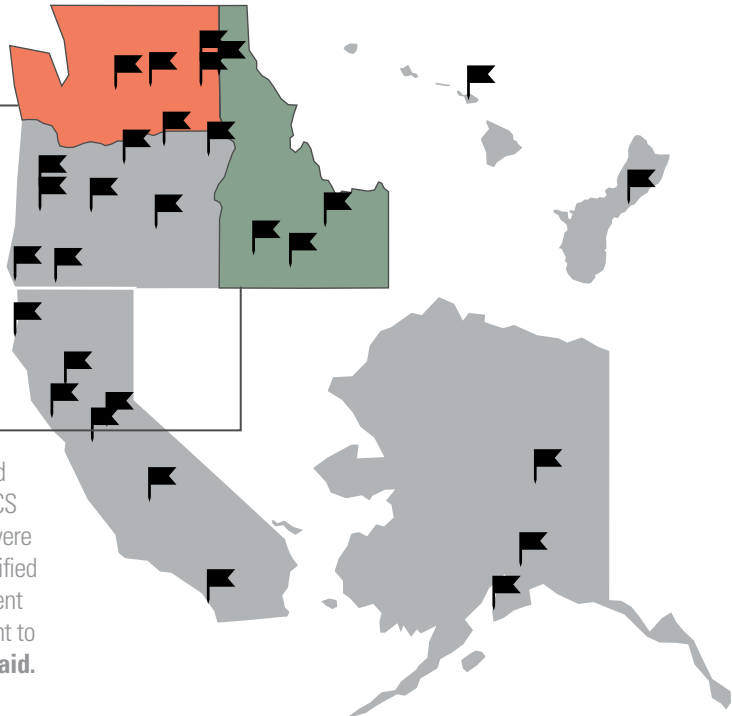
Washington

Increased capacity helped **Kittitas County Conservation District** and the local NRCS field office process a higher number of contracts than in years past for projects including sprinkler conversions, pipelines and fish screens.



IDAHO

Butte Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) has hired two full-time employees that have assisted with all aspects of NRCS programs — field work, contract writing, customer service — and were able to attend NRCS trainings and start the process of becoming certified conservation planners. “One is now applying for full-time employment with NRCS, fulfilling one of the goals of the technical assistance grant to fill NRCS vacancies,” Butte SWCD Board Chairman **Randy Purser said.**



Allowing for more face-to-face time with farmers

Southern Guam Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is using technical assistance grant funds to provide administrative support so technical staff can focus on face-to-face contact with landowners and boost program participation.

The district, which secured a second round of funding, has hired a program support specialist to assist with initial outreach efforts. The first year, the number of NRCS program applications more than quadrupled, from an average of roughly a handful to more than 30.

“We really value the face-to-face meeting with the farmer, getting to know them, and their story,” Southern Guam SWCD District Manager **Erica Pangelinan said.** “The more information the farmer provides with regards to their goals and objectives, the better. Not a lot of farmers know about the financial and technical assistance available to them through NRCS. There hasn’t been

much outreach in the past. The district is working on improving that.”

While applications increased, the number of landowners who were accepted did not. Pangelinan explained that NRCS requirements coupled with land trust and ownership challenges require additional scrutiny and investment. She is confident the new position will help provide solutions for those challenges.

“Another critical part is the follow-up,” **Pangelinan said.** “That’s our main priority now – to work and follow-up as much as possible with the farmer.”

Southern Guam SWCD has assisted with two outreach events that included NRCS staff and experts on programming. More events are planned.

“There is still a learning curve for farmers with regards to NRCS program requirements and the application ranking process,” **Pangelinan said.** “The district is determined to bridge that gap by consistently working one-on-one with the farmer.”



One farmer in Inarajan Guam is now able to use high tunnels and irrigation systems to improve plant productivity, thanks to an EQIP contract.

YEAR ONE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

STATE	\$\$	FTE	EQIP	COTA	ACRES
Alabama	\$210,000	4.0	1,146	448	19,168
Alaska	\$80,000	0.7	398	66	1,064
Arizona	\$175,000	3.5	60	48	196,054
Arkansas	\$306,813	4.0	469	523	61,819
California	\$525,046	3.3	362	86	3,323
Colorado	\$310,161	6.0	860	234	104,367
Connecticut	\$82,000	0.5	2	16	0
Delaware	\$99,000	2.4	15	24	304
Florida	\$141,263	1.7	132	0	5,221
Georgia	\$210,000	0.7	272	37	3,702
Guam	\$32,295	1.0	110	25	50
Hawaii	\$50,000	0.8	270	57	27,415
Idaho	\$168,000	3.1	284	169	62,379
Illinois	\$313,810	4.0	404	76	9,560
Indiana	\$78,464	2.5	539	31	3,919
Iowa	\$263,584	6.3	456	167	30,005
Kansas	\$250,000	6.1	276	837	11,545
Kentucky	\$100,000	2.6	1,165	13	8,989
Louisiana	\$163,200	2.5	256	21	18,822
Maine	\$67,000	0.1	0	0	0
Maryland	\$137,505	2.8	116	34	2,508
Massachusetts	\$100,000	0.8	63	6	200
Michigan	\$132,573	2.1	173	28	2,085
Minnesota	\$382,800	11.9	262	0	15,429
Mississippi	\$245,000	5.4	1,664	78	34,831
Missouri	\$111,891	4.9	759	793	18,912
Montana	\$378,221	7.7	258	38	3,000
Nebraska	\$294,960	5.5	361	267	21,888
Nevada	\$175,000	0.0	0	7	0

\$\$ NACD grant funding awarded to date

FTE estimated number of full-time staff funded by the grant based on reported hours

EQIP number of EQIP contracts the grant-funded staff worked on

COTA number of conservation plans the grant-funded staff worked on

ACRES number of acres impacted by the EQIP contracts

STATE	\$\$	FTE	EQIP	COTA	ACRES
New Jersey	\$136,136	2.2	76	1	255
New Mexico	\$122,053	2.1	89	0	0
New York	\$39,800	0.5	5	8	0
North Carolina	\$300,500	2.8	201	1591	5,326
North Dakota	\$61,360	0.8	15	21	0
Ohio	\$77,250	1.3	492	2	1,039
Oklahoma	\$45,565	1.1	591	0	0
Oregon	\$255,893	2.2	371	649	9,229
Pennsylvania	\$208,454	3.8	91	204	1,383
Puerto Rico	\$356,955	7.3	1,577	10	21,121
Rhode Island	\$189,519	2.0	162	29	299
South Carolina	\$205,000	2.5	636	17	62,336
Tennessee	\$130,425	2.7	208	120	5,329
Texas	\$216,126	4.8	665	76	12,622
Vermont	\$150,000	2.7	578	19	19,023
Virgin Islands	\$30,000	0.0	0	1	0
Washington	\$213,252	2.6	82	56	3,304
Wisconsin	\$350,681	5.4	297	35	27,923
Wyoming	\$124,000	0.9	20	50	1,836
Total	\$8,796,555	144.4	17,288	7,017	837,583

In each state and territory, the state conservation partnership leaders identified their highest priority issues and the accomplishments listed here reflect those choices. The goal of the technical assistance grants was to allow each of them the flexibility to put the funds toward staff that would best address their local priority concerns. As the success stories on the previous pages highlight, no two grants looked the same or accomplished the same metrics. Their commonality is that they all got the job done.

This booklet is a taste of what can be accomplished by working together. The work continues with agreements providing additional funds in 2019 and 2020.

2018

The first set of grants were issued to 157 recipients.

2019

The second set of grants were issued to 164 recipients in 2019. Some were renewals of the initial grants.

2020

An agreement is in place to provide a third set of grants in 2020.



**With help from NACD technical assistance grants,
nearly 150 full-time and 90 part-time employees
were hired in year one of the program.**



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from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.*

Information in this booklet reflects data reported to date.

*NACD's services and programs are provided without regard to
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Cover photo: Mark Schaetzke of the Waseca SWCD in Minnesota.



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