

ICP Conservation Programs and Initiatives Descriptions

ACEP - [Agricultural Conservation Easement Program](#) - The USDA Agriculture Conservation Program provides financial and technical assistance to help conserve agricultural lands and wetlands and their related benefits. Under the Agricultural Land Easements component, NRCS helps Indian tribes, state and local governments and non-governmental organizations protect working agricultural lands and limit non-agricultural uses of the land. Under the Wetlands Reserve Easements component, NRCS helps to restore, protect and enhance enrolled wetlands.

ARS CEAP Study – [Ag Research Service CEAP Study Area](#) - The research is using paired sub watersheds at different scales within the St. Joseph River Watershed at DeKalb County, Indiana, to compare surface runoff, subsurface drainage, and stream level water quality parameters with and without CORE 4 BMPs and/or other BMPs considered effective for this resource need (as agreed upon and implemented by NRCS and growers); and using watershed water quality models and long term climatic data to generate probability estimates of the water quality benefits achievable through comprehensive implementation of these conservation practices throughout these watersheds.

Beargrass Creek Paired Watershed Study - The Bear Creek Paired Watershed Study is in the third year of five year funding from the Indiana Corn Marketing Council and Indiana Soybean Alliance. This project compares chemical, physical and biological parameters a 2,500 acre treatment sub-watershed of Beargrass Creek with a 1,600 acre reference sub-watershed in Pawpaw Creek in Wabash County, Indiana. Beargrass Creek is a National Water Quality Initiative watershed and part of a larger study that examines the entire 14,700 acre watershed.

CREP – [Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program](#) - The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is a federal-state natural resources conservation program that addresses agricultural-related environmental concerns at the state and national level. CREP participants receive financial incentives to voluntarily enroll in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) in contracts of 14 to 15 years. Participants remove cropland from agricultural production and convert the land to native grasses, trees and other vegetation.

CSP - [Conservation Stewardship Program](#) - The USDA Conservation Stewardship Program is a voluntary program that encourages agricultural producers to improve conservation systems by improving, maintaining, and managing existing conservation activities and undertaking additional conservation activities. The Natural Resources Conservation Service administers this program and provides financial and technical assistance to eligible producers.

CWI – [Clean Water Indiana Program](#) - The Clean Water Indiana (CWI) Program was established to provide financial assistance to landowners and conservation groups. The financial assistance supports the implementation of conservation practices which will reduce nonpoint sources of water pollution through education, technical assistance, training, and cost sharing programs. The CWI fund is administered by the Division of Soil Conservation under the direction of the State Soil Conservation Board.

EDF Conservation Innovation Grant – [Environment Defense Fund](#) - The goal of this project is to demonstrate and document how partners can design and implement an effective and efficient systems approach to agricultural conservation that builds upon and connects current efforts to achieve greater water quality improvements. This project demonstrates the value of organizing conservation efforts at the 12-digit HUC watershed scale, which bridges the field and farm scale of traditional conservation efforts with the community and/or regional scales at which local water quality issues, such as drinking water impairments, and downstream hypoxia must be solved. In addition, by incorporating downstream

practices that can improve the storage and management of water, the watershed approach taken by this project can provide ancillary benefits to water quality, such as increased resiliency to drought and flood, helping producers cope with climactic variability.

EQIP - [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) - The USDA Environmental Quality Incentive Program is a voluntary conservation program that helps agricultural producers in a manner that promotes agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible goals. Through EQIP, farmers and ranchers receive financial and technical assistance to implement structural and management conservation practices that optimize environmental benefits on working agricultural land.

GLRI – [Great Lakes Restoration Initiative](#) - The President's 2010 Budget provides \$475 million in EPA's budget for a new Environmental Protection Agency-led, interagency Great Lakes restoration initiative, which will target the most significant problems in the region, including invasive aquatic species, non-point source pollution, and contaminated sediment.

HRI – [Healthy River Initiative](#) - The Healthy Rivers Initiative, the largest land conservation initiative to be undertaken in Indiana, was announced in June 2010. It includes a partnership of resource agencies and organizations who are working with willing landowners to permanently protect more than 43,000 acres along the Wabash River and Sugar Creek in west-central Indiana, and more than 26,000 acres of the Muscatatuck River bottomlands in southeast Indiana. To date, the effort has added to the opening of three conservation areas for recreational use: Austin Bottoms, Sugar Creek and Wabash River.

IDEM Section 205j- The federal [Clean Water Act Section 205\(j\)](#) provides funding for water quality management planning. Funds are to be used to determine the nature, extent and causes of point and nonpoint source pollution problems and to develop plans to resolve these problems.

IDEM Section 319- The 1987 amendments to the Clean Water Act (CWA) established the [Section 319 Nonpoint Source Management Program](#). Section 319 addresses the need for greater federal leadership to help focus state and local nonpoint source efforts. Under Section 319, states, territories and tribes receive grant money that supports a wide variety of activities including technical assistance, financial assistance, education, training, technology transfer, demonstration projects and monitoring to assess the success of specific nonpoint source implementation projects.

Landscape Restoration Partnership – [Joint Chiefs Landscape Restoration Partnership](#) - The Hoosier Hills and Highlands Oak Community Restoration Partnership project area is located within 18 counties of the most heavily forested and biologically diverse forest systems in the Central Hardwoods Region. The area provides habitat for federal and state-listed bats, birds, cave-dwelling species, and other declining wildlife species and also contains watersheds that provide drinking water to several communities. This project seeks to consolidate the individual efforts of a variety of partners focusing on oak community regeneration within the region. Project activities will help improve water quality, reduce wildfire risk, and enhance at-risk habitat on public and private lands. The project will also promote improved and complementary conservation and restoration practices on private lands, ensure consistent education and outreach, and enable implementation of preferred practices.

LARE – [Lake and River Enhancement Program](#) - The goal of the Division of Fish and Wildlife's Lake and River Enhancement Section is to protect and enhance aquatic habitat for fish and wildlife, to insure the continued viability of Indiana's publicly accessible lakes and streams for multiple uses, including recreational opportunities. This is accomplished through measures that reduce non-point sediment and nutrient pollution of surface waters to a level that meets or surpasses state water quality standards.

MRBI – [Mississippi River Basin Initiative](#) - To improve the health of the Mississippi River Basin, including water quality, wetland restoration, and wildlife habitat, the Natural Resources Conservation Service has established the Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative (MRBI). Through this Initiative, NRCS and its partners will help producers in targeted watersheds within the Mississippi River Basin voluntarily implement conservation practices that avoid, control, and trap nutrient runoff while maintaining agricultural productivity.

NWQI – [National Water Quality Initiative](#) - The National Water Quality Initiative will work in priority watersheds to help farmers, ranchers and forest landowners improve water quality and aquatic habitats in impaired streams. NRCS will help producers implement conservation and management practices through a systems approach to control and trap nutrient and manure runoff. Qualified producers will receive assistance for installing conservation practices such as cover crops, filter strips and terraces.

Ohio River Basin Trading Project – In August 2012, Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky signed the trading plan making it now the world’s largest water quality trading program. Water quality trading is an innovative market-based approach to achieving water quality goals for nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen through programs that allow permitted emitters to purchase nutrient reductions from another source.

RCPP – [Regional Conservation Partnership Program](#) - The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) promotes coordination between NRCS and its partners to deliver conservation assistance to producers and landowners. NRCS provides assistance to producers through partnership agreements and through program contracts or easement agreements.

School Branch Watershed Study - A collaboration of federal, state, local, and academic entities along with dedicated conservation minded farmers provides a unique monitoring opportunity to assess the chemical, physical, and biological impacts of conservation practices at the watershed, sub-watershed, and edge-of- field scales in the School Branch watershed. The project will measure water quality associated with conservation cropping systems that improve soil health in predominantly corn and soybean row crop agriculture.

WLEB – [Western Lake Erie Basin Phosphorus Reduction](#) - The five-year Tri-State Western Lake Erie Basin Phosphorus Reduction Initiative is a multi-state RCPP project that brings together more than 40 partnering organizations from Michigan, Ohio and Indiana to reduce the runoff of phosphorous into the Western Lake Erie Basin.