

Most contracts for conservation financial assistance require conservation practices to be maintained for at least three years. One contracted practice must be implemented within one year after entering into the agreement.

Some groups of producers are eligible for higher financial assistance rates and can receive a portion of their contract payment before practices are implemented.

Applicants must own the land or have documentation demonstrating control of the land for the duration of the contract. Some eligibility requirements for participating in USDA conservation programs include complying with highly erodible land and wetland conservation requirements. Program participants must also comply with adjusted gross income limitations as well as other eligibility requirements.

For more information about conservation assistance, contact your local NRCS office.

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service field offices serving the St. Joseph River Watershed in Michigan.

Berrien County - Berrien Springs
(269) 421-3056

Branch County - Coldwater
(517) 278-2725

Calhoun County - Marshall
(269) 781-4263

Cass County - Cassopolis
(269) 228-7087

Hillsdale County - Jonesville
(517) 849-9890

Kalamazoo County - Portage
(269) 382-5121

St. Joseph County - Centreville
(269) 467-6336

Van Buren County - Paw Paw
(269) 657-4220

Some Michigan Members of the St. Joseph River Watershed Conservation Partnership



USDA Regional Conservation Partnership Program

The USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.



United States Department of Agriculture

St. Joseph Watershed Conservation Partnership



USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

www.mi.nrcs.usda.gov

Conservation Partnership is a joint effort to help farmers optimize groundwater use, reduce the amount of nutrients and sediment leaving crop fields and improve wildlife and fisheries habitat.

The partnership receives funding through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Regional Conservation Partnership Program. The project is locally-led by the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development along with local conservation districts, American Indian tribes, MSU and Purdue extension agencies and other governmental, non-profit and for-profit organizations.

The project area includes all or portions of eight southwest Michigan counties and seven northeast Indiana counties.



Project Area

Financial assistance is available to agricultural producers in the project area for implementing designated conservation practices.

Some of the core conservation practices eligible for financial assistance include;

- residue and tillage management
- amending soil properties with gypsum
- conservation cover
- cover crops
- critical area planting
- filter strips, field borders & buffers
- stream habitat improvement
- grassed waterways
- sprinkler systems
- irrigation water management
- prescribed grazing
- drainage water management
- nutrient management



Applying gypsum to improve soil quality

A number of supporting practices are also eligible for financial assistance.

To receive conservation financial assistance, producers must first visit their local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service field office. A local conservationist will assist in determining what conservation practices will best address the resource concerns of the farming operation.



After a plan is developed to treat resource concerns, the producer can submit an application for financial assistance to implement conservation actions included in the plan. Applications are accepted on a continuous basis.

Applications are selected on a competitive basis on designated cut-off dates. When an application is selected, the producer may enter into a contract with NRCS to implement conservation practices and receive a designated amount of financial assistance. In most cases, financial assistance is provided after the practice is implemented to NRCS standards.