

2016 Conservation Stewardship Program Sign Up

February 2016

INFORMATION ALERT

Deadline Coming March 31

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has announced a cut-off date for farmer applications to the **Conservation Stewardship Program** (CSP) for enrollment in the program during Fiscal Year (FY) 2016.

Farmers and ranchers interested in enrolling in CSP for FY 2016 must complete the initial brief application form by March 31, 2016.

Important: Though you can apply for CSP at anytime, if you miss the cut-off you wait a full year before your application will be entertained. So get the application form in by March 31 to secure your chance to enroll in 2016!

A major program overhaul is scheduled for 2017, so in order to enroll in CSP under its existing structure, ranking process, and current conservation activities, you must apply by the March 31 deadline

Also, for current CSP participants who initially enrolled in the program in 2012, you can apply to renew your participation in CSP for an additional five years, provided you re-apply by March 31, 2016.

Important: Sign up to renew by the end of March even if you are not yet sure if you will actually renew. You will have time after the end of March to work out the details of the renewal and can then decide at that time whether to renew or not. But if you have not submitted the application by March 31, you will lose out on the option of renewing. See more about renewals below.

Process and Timeline for Enrolling in CSP

Step 1: Applying to Participate is Simple

There are three simple steps to apply to enroll in CSP:

First, you must complete a short and simple **application form**, [NRCS Form CPA 1200](#) (PDF). This is the same, generic three-page form that is used for all NRCS conservation programs that offer financial assistance to farmers and ranchers, and is available online and also at your [local NRCS office](#). It is fairly quick and easy to fill out, though take special note of the next two points, as they have tripped up some producers in the past.

Second, you must have a *farm record number* established with USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA). If you do not currently have one, go to your [local FSA office](#) first to establish your farm record before submitting the CSP application.

Although not required, appointments with your local FSA office are strongly recommended when obtaining a farm record number from them. The process is fairly simple. Set up an appointment, provide your social security or EIN number, and bring your property deed(s) or lease agreement document(s) with you. You will be assigned a farm record number, and can, if you care to, also avail yourself of other services FSA provides, such as farm mapping or FSA loan program information.

Third, if you are applying as an entity rather than as an individual, you must also have a *Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number*, which is a unique number used to identify your farm business. In addition you will need a current registration for the *System for Award Management (SAM)*. Both are easy to obtain, but if you do not have a DUNS and a current SAM registration, you need to get started right away, as they take some time to get.

The process to apply for a DUNS takes about one business day, and when you apply you will need to be able to provide contact information, the number of employees, the legal structure of your operation, the year it was established, and the SIC code, which is a US Department of Labor business classification that can be [looked up online](#). When you have this information you can apply for a DUNS online at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. It is no longer possible to apply over the phone, but if you can't apply online then you may contact the commercial company Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) by phone at (806) 705-5711 and request that an application is sent in the mail.

Next, after obtaining a DUNS number, you must register with SAM, which is a government-wide registry for anyone doing business with the federal government. SAM centralizes information about federal financial assistance recipients, and it also provides an easy way for you to update any information. SAM replaced the Centralized Contractor Registration (CCR), so if you had an active record in the CCR, you automatically have an active record in SAM; however, everyone needs to renew SAM registration each year as long as you have an account with NRCS, and an expired account may impact your payment eligibility.

You can begin the SAM process at <http://sam.gov/>, and should have the following information ready: your DUNS number, EIN number, general statistical information about your business, and information for electronic transfer of payments. You should plan ahead for the SAM application, because a newly assigned EIN number can take up to 2 to 5 weeks before it is active and valid for the SAM application. This is the most common hold up on becoming eligible for to apply for CSP, so start early!

The actual process of obtaining DUNS/ SAM is easy, free, and can all be completed online, but make sure you plan ahead to be ready for when the application period opens! And remember, if you are applying as an individual, you do not need to do this; this is only for entities.

Those are the only three things you need to apply to participate in the program: the three-page NRCS-CPA-1200 form, the FSA farm record number, and, if applying as an entity, the DUNS number and SAM registration.

Checklist Available

Please note that NRCS has developed a self-screening checklist to help farmers decide if the program is right for them. The checklist covers basic applicant and land eligibility issues as well as the stewardship threshold that CSP farmers must meet. While use of the self-screening checklist is not required, it can be a useful first step in deciding whether to begin the application process. [You can access the checklist on NRCS' website.](#)

For more information and to start the application process, [visit your local NRCS service center.](#)

Step 2: Completing the Conservation Measurement Tool

Once you have completed and submitted the short application form (see above, NRCS-CPA-1200) by the March 31, 2016 cut-off date, you will then have a period of approximately one to two months to sit down with your local NRCS staff person and fill out the CSP ***Conservation Measurement Tool*** (CMT) which will be used to determine your program eligibility, your environmental benefits ranking score, and CSP contract payment amounts. The CMT session generally lasts an hour or two. Be sure to check with your local NRCS office to find out when you should come in to complete the CMT.

The CMT collects information about the conservation activities that you are currently managing and maintaining on your farm, as well as the new conservation practices or enhancements to conservation activities you want to add with assistance from the program. The NRCS website includes links to all the [CMT questions related to ongoing conservation activities](#) (scroll down to “Operations Baseline Data Questions” and to “CMT Questions”) as well as links to all the available [new conservation enhancements and practices.](#)

More information about those conservation activity choices follows below under the ***Conservation Enhancements and Practices*** heading and in the scoring table toward the end of this Alert.

The CMT displays performance points in real time, which allows you to perform a “what-if” analysis and see how your score changes based on your responses to questions and choices in the CMT. That feature helps you test different conservation enhancement choices and combinations. The tool also breaks down your total ranking score so you can see how past performance has impacted your ranking and areas where improvement is necessary.

Step 3: Farm Site Visit and Contract Preparation

Within a month or two of the CMT completion, NRCS will complete an ***on-farm verification*** visit to each farm that ranks high enough to be enrolled in the program this year. After the farm site visit, you will work with NRCS staff to develop a ***CSP plan and contract***, which includes a schedule for new enhancement implementation and a payment schedule. The ***first annual***

payment for a five-year contract awarded in this round will be made on or after October 1, 2016, and then every October 1 thereafter for the five years of the CSP contract.

Step 4: CSP Contract Renewal

CSP contracts last for five years. However, you may re-enroll in CSP for additional five-year contract terms as a current contract expires. To be eligible for a contract renewal, you must demonstrate that you are currently in compliance with your initial five-year contract, adopt at least one new enhancement, and demonstrate that during the new contract term you will have exceeded the stewardship threshold on at least five priority resource concerns, two more than was required during the initial contract.

Farmers and ranchers whose initial contracts were for 2012 through 2016 now have the option to apply to renew. If you are in that category, be sure to submit your application to renew by **March 31, 2016**. You will then go through the CMT process again, which will help determine your options and payment rates for additional conservation.

Although you can sign up for CSP anytime throughout the year, if you miss the March 31 deadline will not be considered until 2017. This year's sign-up deadline carries particular significance, as a major program overhaul is scheduled for 2017. In order to enroll in CSP under its existing structure, ranking process, and current conservation activities, you must apply to renew your contract by the March 31 deadline.

If you signed a contract in 2012 you must renew this year in order to remain the program for the next five years (2017- 2021).

CSP Background in Brief

The *Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)* is a [working lands conservation program](#) administered by NRCS and available on a nationwide basis. CSP offers technical and financial assistance to farmers for adopting and maintaining high standards of resource conservation and environmental stewardship on eligible lands. Assistance is geared toward both the active management of existing conservation systems and the implementation of new conservation activities on land in agricultural production.

The program currently has nearly 46,000 farmers and ranchers enrolled, operating almost 70 million acres of farm and ranch land in five-year, renewable CSP conservation contracts. This includes the contracts originally enrolled in 2012 through 2015, as well as an additional 16,000 contracts, covering more than 26 million acres, which were renewed in 2014 and 2015.

NSAC regularly analyzes and reports on CSP participation data. Visit our website for recently published information on trends in [CSP enrollment](#), [conservation activities](#) supported through CSP, [production trends](#), and program use by [beginning and socially disadvantaged producers](#).

Eligible lands include cropland, grassland, prairie land, improved pastureland, rangeland, non-industrial private forestlands, and agricultural land under tribal jurisdiction. Cropped woodlands, marshes, land being used for livestock production, and other private lands on which resource concerns can be addressed are also eligible. Applicants must demonstrate they have effective control over these lands to be eligible, either through ownership or reasonably secure leases.

CSP eligibility, ranking, and payment levels are tied to how well a farmer is addressing ***priority resource concerns*** on their farm. Priority resource concerns vary by state (and within some states by watershed as well) and can include, for example, soil quality, soil erosion, water quality, water quantity, wildlife habitat, plant or biodiversity, air quality, and energy conservation. Each state selects and assigns at least five priority resource concerns at either the state or watershed level.

You can find out the priority resource concerns in your state by visiting [your state's NRCS website](#), going to the "Programs" tab, and then to the CSP page to look for "priority resource concerns" for your state or area of the state. Be forewarned that not all state offices make this information easy to find. If you cannot find your state's priority resource concerns on the state CSP webpage, or if you are instead redirected to the national CSP page, try searching for "priority resource concerns" on your state's NRCS website. If you still cannot find it on the website, call your local NRCS office for the information.

For each priority resource concern, NRCS has determined a ***"stewardship threshold" level*** for superior conservation. To enroll in CSP, an applicant must already be addressing at least two priority resource concerns to at least the stewardship threshold level and be willing to reach or exceed the stewardship threshold for at least one additional resource concern during the contract period. For those renewing existing contracts, at least five priority resource concerns must be met or exceed the stewardship threshold by the end of the second contract term.

Farmers and ranchers who do not meet the eligibility threshold may alternatively seek assistance for conservation improvements through the [Environmental Quality Incentives Program \(EQIP\)](#), using

EQIP funding to help them reach the higher eligibility standard for CSP, and then re-apply for CSP in a future year. Also, please note that you can be enrolled in both CSP and EQIP at the same time, provided that the contracts are not paying for the same conservation practice.

The ***national average payment*** to participants is \$18 per acre; however, the actual payment received varies widely depending on the type of land enrolled, the existing level of conservation, and the number and type of new enhancements and practices to be adopted. Cropland generally receives the highest payment rate, with range and forestland at the lower end, and pasture in the middle. Pastured cropland receives payment rates in between cropland and pasture rates.

A person or business entity ***may not receive more than \$40,000 per year*** in CSP payments. Joint or multi-family operations are limited to not more than \$80,000 per year. The cap does not apply to tribal land applications.

New Minimum Contract Payment for All Participants

Beginning in FY 16, USDA will make \$1,500 the ***minimum contract payment*** for all successful applicants. NSAC has long advocated for this change in order not to prejudice CSP against small acreage, high value operations and to help reap the added conservation benefits.

The new \$1,500 minimum represents an increase of \$500 over the previous \$1,000 annual minimum that was available for the 2015 sign-up period. While the \$1,000 annual minimum floor was only available for beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, the new \$1,500 is now available to all farmers. NSAC applauds NRCS for making this change to more appropriately reward superior environmental performance for all operations, regardless of their size.

While the new minimum payment limit applies to all new contracts enrolled in 2016, it does not apply for expiring contracts that renew in 2016. NSAC hopes that NRCS will eventually extend this minimum to include renewals, as returning applicants would also benefit from the increased incentive and opportunity.

Beginning and Minority Farmer Provisions

Five percent of all CSP acres each year are reserved for ***separate competitions*** among beginning farmers only and among socially disadvantaged (minority) farmers only. Veterans that are also beginning, socially disadvantaged, or limited resource farmers are given preference within these categories.

If you are not sure whether you qualify as a beginning, socially disadvantaged, or limited resource farmer, [you can learn more here](#). If you qualify, it is generally advantageous to compete within the smaller pool rather than against all other producers applying to enroll in the program.

CSP Conservation Enhancements and Practices

Financial assistance for the adoption of new conservation activities through CSP is divided into two categories – regular conservation practices, and conservation enhancements, which are conservation activities that go above and beyond the requirements of regular conservation practices. The crux of CSP new conservation activity rests upon these advanced conservation enhancements; however, farmers can also use regular conservation practices to help them meet stewardship thresholds for additional priority resource concerns during the life of the contract.

The list of conservation activities for 2016 includes a total of 119 individual conservation **enhancements**. Beyond individual enhancements, the 2016 list of activities includes 14 **enhancement bundles**. Bundles are groupings of conservation enhancements that the agency feels may work well together on particular types of farms.

To view the bundles, go to this section of NRCS's [CSP website](#). Please note that six of the bundles are for geographically specific initiatives, one set for longleaf pines and another set for water conservation in the Ogallala aquifer.

In addition to the available conservation enhancements, producers can choose from a list of 35 regular conservation practices to help them reach or exceed the stewardship threshold for the additional priority resources concerns during the life of the contract.

See below for more information on specific conservation activities, including high-ranking conservation activities and a list of all conservation practices and enhancements ranked by their environmental benefits score.

Supplemental Payments for Crop Rotation

A substantial supplemental payment is available for adopting or improving a resource-conserving crop rotation, in recognition of the very important multiple resource benefits that longer, more diverse rotations provide. Resource-conserving crop rotations (RCCRs) can include cover crops, forages, or green manures, with the goal of reducing erosion, improving soil fertility and tilth, interrupting pest cycles, and when applicable, reducing the depletion of soil moisture or otherwise reducing the need for irrigation. The rotation must include at least one “resource-conserving crop,” which can be a perennial grass, a legume, a legume-grass mixture, or a small grain grown in combination with a grass or legume that is used as a green manure.

The payment rate for resource-conserving crop rotations for 2016 is \$15 per acre.

For more information on the supplemental payment for resource conserving crop rotations, [click here](#).

You can download a document containing all of the CSP conservation activities on the [NRCS website](#).

Organic Crosswalk

For producers interested in learning more about how CSP enhancements can be used to assist in transitioning to organic production and meeting National Organic Program (NOP) requirements, you can download the NRCS “[Organic Crosswalk](#).”

High Ranking Conservation Activities

Grass-Based Livestock Systems

Of particular interest to sustainable livestock producers, CSP in 2016 will continue to offer a variety of activities with high environmental benefit scores, including:

- Prescriptive grazing management system for grazing lands
- Monitoring pasture health using pasture condition scores
- Conversion of cropped land to grass-based agriculture
- Management of rangeland soil health
- Intensive rotational grazing
- Rotation of supplement and feeding areas
- Prairie restoration for grazing and wildlife habitat

At somewhat lower environmental benefit scores but still significant are:

- Prescribed grazing
- Forage and biomass planting
- Establish and maintain early successional vegetation
- Monitoring grazing areas to improve management
- Range planting
- High species diversity grazing lands
- Transition to organic grazing systems

Sustainable and Organic Cropping Systems

Of particular interest to crop farmers utilizing sustainable and organic agriculture systems, CSP in 2016 will offer a variety of activities with high environmental benefit scores, including:

- Soil health crop rotation
- High residue and intensive cover cropping
- Intensive no-till for organic and non-organic systems
- Cover cropping for orchards, vineyards, perennial horticulture
- Intensive cover cropping for annual crops
- Improving resource-conserving crop rotations
- Resource-conserving crop rotations
- Planting cover crops to scavenge residual nitrogen
- Using cover crop mixes
- Using deep rooted cover crops to break up compaction
- Using legume cover crops as a nitrogen source
- Providing nitrogen through legumes, manure, and compost

At somewhat lower environmental scores but still significant are:

- Drainage water management
- Residue and tillage management – no till, strip till, mulch till, ridge till
- Alley cropping
- IPM for organic farming and high level IPM for non-organic systems
- On-farm composting of farm organic waste
- Use soil health nutrient tool to assess soil nutrient pools
- Intermittent flooding of rice fields
- Intercropping
- Biological suppression of weeds and invasives
- Transition to organic cropping systems

Irrigated Agriculture

For irrigated agriculture, some of the high scoring activities include:

- Decrease irrigation or convert to non-irrigated production
- Center pivot end gun removal
- Low energy precision application irrigation
- Advanced irrigation water management
- Irrigation system automation
- Irrigation water management
- Using regional weather networks for irrigation scheduling
- Remote monitoring and notification of pumping plant operations

Wildlife Habitat

There are also a variety of high-scoring enhancements and practices geared toward establishing and improving wildlife habitat, including:

- Forest stand improvement for wildlife habitat
- Extend riparian forest buffers for water quality protection and wildlife habitat
- Extend existing filter strips or riparian cover for water quality protection and wildlife habitat
- Prairie restoration for grazing and wildlife habitat
- Creation and retention of wildlife habitat in trees
- Multi-species native perennials for wildlife habitat and biomass
- Renovation of windbreaks, shelterbelts or hedgerows for wildlife habitat
- Removal of all threats to wildlife species on the operation
- Extending field borders
- Riparian buffers for terrestrial and aquatic wildlife habitat
- Pollinator and beneficial insect habitat

Land Transitioning from CRP to CSP

CSP offers several very high scoring activities that are specific to land that is leaving the Conservation Reserve Program and transitioning back into production, including:

- Crop management system for land converted from CRP or similar perennial vegetation
- Enhance wildlife habitat on expired tree covered CRP acres or acres with similar woody cover managed as forestland

- Prescriptive grazing systems including expired CRP land
- Enhance wildlife habitat on expired grass/legume covered CRP acres or acres with similar perennial vegetated cover managed as hayland.

Conservation Enhancement and Practice Choices for 2016 and their Environmental Benefit Ranking Score

Each year, NSAC makes available a list of all the available options for enhancements, practices, and bundles in the order of their environmental benefit scores. These points help determine whether an application will rank high enough to be selected for enrollment. They also figure into the calculation of how much a producer will be paid – the higher the score, the higher the payment. NSAC’s chart (below) lists the activities from highest scoring to lowest scoring.

Clarification of Terms

Conservation enhancements are advanced conservation activities that go above and beyond the more basic requirements of regular conservation practices. Conservation enhancements are available to all CSP participants who are willing to adopt the enhancement on their operation, or who are willing to improve an existing conservation activity so that it fully meets the requirements for the enhancement.

Some enhancements apply to all four CSP land use categories -- cropland, pasture, rangeland, or forested land -- though many apply to one or two land use types specifically. These are indicated in the chart below in the right hand column, with a C, P, R and/or F for cropland, pasture, rangeland, or forest. For more information, see the 2016 Conservation Activity List on NRCS’ [CSP website](#).

Regular conservation practices are the traditional practices available in the NRCS Field Office Technical Guides and available through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and other NRCS offerings. Particular conservation practices are available to CSP participants who, when they sign-up for the program, are not already meeting or exceeding the stewardship threshold for the five priority resource concerns for their state or region and for whom the practice will help them meet one or more additional stewardship thresholds.

Conservation baseline activities are the conservation practices and measures that are already part of your operation. Baseline activities are also scored with similar environmental benefit point values for ranking and payment purposes. Those existing conservation activities are not listed below. However, more information on those activities can be found on the NRCS website listed above under the heading “Operations Baseline Data Questions” and more information on the point values can be found on the same website under “Conservation Measurement Tool Inventory Questions” and then “CMT Scoring Process”.

Point values listed in the chart below are based on the overall level of expected environmental benefits from improvement or adoption of the enhancement or practice for soil conservation, soil quality, water conservation, water quality, air quality, energy conservation, wildlife habitat, and biodiversity, as determined by NRCS scientists using their “conservation practice physical effects” (CPPE) system.

2016 CSP Enhancements and Practices

**Listed From Highest Scoring to Lowest Scoring
Based on Projected Conservation & Environmental Benefit**

➤ **CSP Conservation Enhancements are listed below in Regular Typeface**

➤ *Regular Conservation Practices are listed below in Italics*

Enhancements and Practices	Activity Code	Environmental Benefit Score	<u>Cropland</u> <u>Pasture</u> <u>Range</u> <u>Forest</u>
Soil Health Crop Rotation	SQL18	217.83	C
Crop Management System where Crop Land Acres were Recently Converted from CRP Grass/Legume Cover or Similar Perennial Vegetation	SQL10	153.3	C
Enhance Wildlife Habitat on Expired Tree Covered CRP Acres or Acres with Similar Woody Cover Managed as Forestland	ANM36	95.55	F
Prescriptive Grazing Management System for Grazing Lands (includes expired CRP grass/legume/tree covered acres converted to a grazing lands)	ANM37	88.2	C, P, R, F
Enhance Wildlife Habitat on Expired Grass/Legume Covered CRP Acres or Acres with Similar Perennial Vegetated Cover Managed as Hayland	ANM35	87.4	C
High Residue Cover Crop or Mixtures of High Residue Cover Crops for Weed Suppression and Soil Health	PLT20	84	C
Forest Stand Improvement for Soil Health	SQL13	78	F
Forest Stand Improvement, Prescribed Burning – Short Return Interval	PLT31	70	F
Monitor Pasture Health Using Pasture Condition Scores	PLT30	69	P
Forest Stand Improvement for Wildlife Habitat and Soil Quality	ANM42	68	F
Intensive No Till (Organic or Non-organic)	SOE05	62	C
Increase Summer Roost Habitat for Forest Dwelling Bat Species	ANM56	61	F
Conversion of Cropped Land to Grass-Based Agriculture	SQL09	59	C
Cover Cropping in Orchards, Vineyards and Other Woody Perennial Horticultural Crops	SQL11	55	C
Intensive Cover Cropping in Annual Crops	SQL12	55	C
Management for Rangeland Soil Health	SQL19	52.5	R
Improved Resource Conservation Crop Rotation	CCR98	49	C
Extending Riparian Forest Buffers for Water Quality Protection and Wildlife Habitat	ANM39	48	C, P, F
Forest Stand Improvement Pre-Treating Vegetation and Fuels Preceding a Prescribed Fire	PLT21	47.25	F
Intensive Rotational Grazing	PLT16	45	P, R, F
Decrease Irrigation Water Quantity or Conversion to Non-Irrigated Crop Production	WQT08	44	C, P

Resource-Conserving Crop Rotation	CCR99	44	C
<i>Cover Crop</i>	340	42	C
Plant a Cover Crop that will Scavenge Residual Nitrogen	WQL10	42	C
<i>Riparian Forest Buffer</i>	391	42	C, P
Use of Cover Crop Mixes	SQL04	42	C, P
Use of Deep Rooted Crops to Breakup Soil Compaction	SQL05	42	C
Use of Legume Cover Crops as a Nitrogen Source	ENR12	42	C
Extend Existing Filter Strips or Riparian Herbaceous Cover for Water Quality Protection and Wildlife Habitat	ANM32	41	C, P, R
Using Nitrogen Provided by Legumes, Animal Manure and Compost to Supply 90-100% of the Nitrogen Needs	ENR10	41	C, P
Crop Tree Release in Young Hardwood Stands	PLT24	40	F
Rotation of Supplement and Feeding Areas	WQL03	40	P, R, F
<i>Tree/ Shrub Establishment</i>	612	40	C, P, R, F
Center Pivot Irrigation System End Gun Removal	WQT10	38	C, P
Conifer Crop Tree Release	PLT23	38	F
Prairie Restoration for Grazing and Wildlife Habitat	ANM21	37	C, P, R
Discontinuing Burning Crop Residue	AIR10	37	C
Low Energy Precision Application (LEPA) Irrigation	WQT11	37	C
Forest Stand Improvement to Treat Understory Vegetation -- to minimize the risk of damaging wildfires, and/or manipulate the density and composition of tree species to improve wildlife habitat and forest health	PLT26	37	F
Computerized Hole Selection for Polypipe	WQT12	37	C
<i>Riparian Herbaceous Cover</i>	390	37	C, P, R
<i>Windbreak/ Shelterbelt Establishment</i>	380	37	C, P, R
High Level or Advanced Irrigation Water Management	WQT09	36	C, P
Irrigation System Automation	WQT01	36	C, P
<i>Prescribed Grazing</i>	528	36	P, R, F
<i>Critical Area Planting</i>	342	35	C, P, R, F
Creation and Retention of Snags, Den Trees and Course Woody Debris for Wildlife Habitat	ANM55	35	F
Rehabilitating Damaged or Cut Over Stands	PLT29	35	F
Drainage Water Management	ANM31	35	C
<i>Residue and Tillage Management, No-Till/ Strip Till/ Direct Seed</i>	329	35	C
<i>Forage and Biomass Planting</i>	512	33	C, P
Increasing On-Farm Food Production with Edible Woody Buffer Landscapes	PLT18	33	C, P, F
<i>Irrigation Water Management</i>	449	33	C, P

Multi-Species Native Perennials for Biomass/Wildlife Habitat	ANM41	33	C, P, R
Regional Weather Networks for Irrigation Scheduling	WQT07	33	C, P
Remote Monitoring and Notification of Irrigation Pumping Plant Operation	WQT05	33	C, P
Establish and Maintain Early Successional, Naturally Occurring Vegetation	ANM51	32	C, P, R
<i>Alley Cropping</i>	311	32	C, P
<i>Conservation Crop Rotation</i>	328	31	C
High Level Integrated Pest Management to Reduce Pesticide Environmental Risk	WQL29	31	C, P, R, F
Integrated Pest Management for Organic Farming	WQL30	31	C, P, R
Monitor Key Grazing Areas to Improve Grazing Management	PLT02	31	P, R, F
On-Farm Composting of Farm Organic Waste	WQL22	31	C, P
Utilize the Soil Health Nutrient Tool to Assess Soil Nutrient Pools	SQL15	31	C, P
Renovation of a Windbreak, Shelter Belt or Hedgerow for Wildlife Habitat	PLT06	31	C, P, R
<i>Restoration and Management of Rare and Declining Habitats</i>	643	31	C, P, R, F
<i>Windbreak/Shelterbelt Renovation</i>	650	31	C, P, R
<i>Conservation Crop Rotation</i>	328	31	C
Prescribed Burning to Promote and Enhance Conifer Forests and Maintain Healthy Understory	PLT28	30	F
<i>Range Planting</i>	550	30	C, P, R
<i>Filter Strip</i>	393	29	C
Removal of All Threats to Sensitive Wildlife Species on the Operation	ANM57	29	C, P, R, F
Intermittent Flooding of Rice Fields	WQT13	29	C
Extending Existing Field Borders for Water Quality Protection and Wildlife Habitat	ANM40	28	C, P
<i>Residue and Tillage Management, Mulch Till</i>	345	28	C
Riparian Buffer, Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife Habitat	ANM33	28	C, P, R, F
Use Drift Reducing Nozzles, Low Pressures, Lower Boom Height, and Adjuvants to Reduce Pesticide Drift	AIR04	28	C, P
Create Small Openings in Pine Stands to Improve Wildlife Habitat or to Prepare the Area for Natural Regeneration	PLT27	27	F
High Species Diversity Grazing Lands	SQL16	27	P, R
Improving Energy Feedstock Production Using Alley Cropping Systems with Short Rotation Woody Crops	ENR11	27	C, P
Drainage Water Management for Nutrient, Pathogen, or Pesticide Reduction	WQL27	26	C
Reduce the Concentration of Nutrients Imported on Farm	WQL26	26	C, P
GPS, Targeted Spray Application (SmartSprayer), or Other Chemical Application Electronic Control Technology	AIR07	25	C, P, R, F
Herbicide Resistant Weed Management	PLT19	25	C
<i>Mulching</i>	484	25	C

Split Applications of Nitrogen based on a PSNT	WQL25	25	C
Transition to Organic Cropping Systems	WQL20	25	C
<i>Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management</i>	644	25	C, P, R, F
Controlled Traffic System	SQL01	24	C
Establish Pollinator and/or Beneficial Insect Habitat	PLT15	24	C, P, R, P
Intercropping to Improve Soil Quality and Increase Biodiversity	SQL08	24	C
Use of Non-Chemical Methods to Kill Cover Crops	WQL33	24	C
Leave Standing Grain Crops Un-Harvested to Benefit Wildlife	ANM34	23	C
Close Structures to Capture and Retain Rainfall for Waterfowl and Wading	ANM44	23	C
Manipulate Vegetation on Fields Where Rainfall is to be Captured and Retained	ANM45	23	C
Shorebird Habitat, Late Season Shallow Water with Manipulation	ANM47	23	C
Shorebird Habitat, Extended Late Season Shallow Water with Manipulation	ANM48	23	C
Early Successional Habitat Between First Rice Crop and Ratoon Crop	ANM49	23	C
Prescribed Burning for Upland Birds and Wildlife	ANM54	23	P, R
Precision Application Technology to Apply Nutrients	WQL11	23	C, P
<i>Upland Wildlife Habitat Management</i>	645	23	C, P, R, F
<i>Watering Facility</i>	614	23	C, P, R, F
<i>Field Border</i>	386	22	C
Removal of Woody Vegetation from Rice Field Levees to Improve Habitat for Nesting King Rail	ANM43	22	C
Placement of Hay Feeding Areas on Low Fertility Soils	SQL17	22	P
Land Application of Treated Manure	WQL31	22	C, P
<i>Road/Trail/Landing Closure and Treatment</i>	654	22	C, F
<i>Stream Habitat Improvement and Management</i>	395	22	C, P, R, F
<i>Forest Stand Improvement</i>	666	21	C, F
Extend Retention of Captured Rainfall to Provide Late Winter Habitat for Migratory Waterfowl and Shorebirds	ANM46	21	C
Control of Undesirable Woody Vegetation in Moist Soil Wetlands to Improve Habitat for Waterfowl, Shorebirds, Wading Birds and Other Wildlife	ANM50	21	C, P, F
Integrate Grazing into Crop and Forest Systems	SQL14	21	C, F
Stockpiling Forages to Extend the Grazing Season	ANM25	21	P
Apply Enhanced Efficiency Fertilizer	WQL32	20	C, P
Biological Suppression and Other Non-Chemical Techniques to Manage Brush, Weeds and Invasive Species	WQL28	20	P, R, F
Patch-Burning to Enhance Wildlife Habitat	ANM11	20	P, R, F
Transition to Organic Grazing Systems	WQL19	20	P, R, F

<i>Early Successional Habitat Development/Management</i>	647	19	C, P, R, F
Fuel Use Reduction for Field Operations	ENR01	19	C
Plant Tissue Tests and Analysis to Improve Nitrogen Management	WQL04	19	C
Shallow Water Habitat	ANM12	19	C, P, R, F
Split Nitrogen Applications 50% After the Crops/Pasture Emerge/Green Up	WQL07	19	C, P
Grazing Management to Improve Sage Grouse Habitat	ANM59	18	P, R
Deferred Grazing to Improve Lesser Prairie-chicken (LPC) Habitat	ANM62	18	P, R
Grazing Management to Improve Wildlife Habitat	ANM09	18	P, R, F
<i>Forest Trails & Landings</i>	655	17	C, F
Incorporate Native Grasses and/or Legumes into 15% or more of Herbage Dry Matter Productivity	ANM03	17	P
Non-Chemical Pest Management for Livestock	WQL18	17	P, R, F
<i>Prescribed Burning</i>	338	17	P, R, F
Irrigation Pumping Plant Evaluation	WQT03	16	C, P
On-Farm Forage Based Grazing System	ANM29	16	P, R, F
Hinge Cutting for Wildlife	ANM53	15	R, F
Implement Fallow Disking to Improve Wildlife Habitat	ANM52	14	R, F
<i>Brush Management</i>	314	14	C, P, R, F
<i>Forage Harvest Management</i>	511	13	C, P
Monitoring Nutritional Status of Livestock Using the NUTBAL PRO System	ANM65	13	P, R
Harvest Crops in a Manner That Allows Wildlife to Flush and Escape	ANM63	12	C
Retrofit Watering Facility for Wildlife Escape and Enhanced Access for Bats and Bird Species	ANM38	12	C, P, R, F
Apply Nutrients no more than 30 Days prior to Planned Planting Date	WQL05	11	C
Multi-Story Cropping, Sustainable Management of Non-Timber Forest Plants	PLT22	10	C, F
Prune Low Density Trees to Improve Tree Quality and Wildlife Habitat	PLT25	10	F
Nitrification Inhibitors or Urease Inhibitors	AIR09	10	C, P
Apply Phosphorus Fertilizer below Soil Surface	WQL09	9	C
Managing Birthing to Coincide with Forage Availability	ANM64	9	P, R
Grouse Friendly Fencing	ANM60	9	C, P, R, F
Wildlife Friendly Fencing	ANM27	9	C, P, R, F
Hosting a Grazing Related Field Day	ANM61	8.7	C, P, R, F
Replace Burning of Prunings, Removals and Other Crop Residues with Non-burning Alternatives	AIR03	8	C
<i>Woody Residue Treatment</i>	384	8	P, R, F

Variable Frequency Drive Electric Motors	ENR13	7	C
<i>Firebreak</i>	394	6	P, R, F
<i>Fuelbreak</i>	383	6	P, R, F
<i>Tree/ Shrub Pruning</i>	660	6	C, F
Reduction of Attractants to Human-Subsidized Predators in Sensitive Wildlife Species Habitat	ANM58	5	C, P, R, F
Create Forest Openings to Improve Hardwood Stands	PLT17	5	F
<i>Fence</i>	382	4	C, P, R, F

<u>Bundles - Nationwide</u>	<u>Activity Code</u>	<u>Environmental Benefit Score</u>
Forest Bundle # 9 (Improves wildlife habitat, soil quality and forest health in conifer and mixed forests)	BFO09	239.50
Crop Technology Bundle #10 (Improves nutrient and pesticide application techniques and widens buffers)	BCR10	167.90
Crop Technology Bundle #11 (Addresses orchard and vineyard resource concerns)	BCR11	167.90
Range Grazing Bundle # 10 (Address multiple resource concerns)	BRA10	148.35
Pasture Grazing Bundle # 9 (Addresses multiple resource concerns)	BPA09	135.70
Pasture Grazing Bundle # 10 (Improve forage utilization)	BPA10	126.50
Forest Bundle # 10 (Improves wildlife habitat in hardwood or mixed forests)	BFO10	113.85
Range Grazing Bundle # 11 (Addresses multiple resource concerns)	BRA11	100.05

<u>Bundles – Ogalalla Initiative</u>	<u>Activity Code</u>	<u>Environmental Benefit Score</u>
Ogalalla Initiative Bundle #2	BOI02	185.74
Ogalalla Initiative Bundle #1	BOI01	184.59
Ogalalla Initiative Bundle #3	BOI03	175.39

<u>Bundles – Long Leaf Pine Initiative</u>	<u>Activity Code</u>	<u>Environmental Benefit Score</u>
Long Leaf Pine Initiative Bundle #3	BPI03	290.55
Long Leaf Pine Initiative Bundle #1	BPI01	149.61
Long Leaf Pine Initiative Bundle #2	BPI02	142.02

Also Available:
Farmers' Guide to the Conservation Stewardship Program

NSAC has published an updated 2015/2016 version of our *Farmers' Guide to the Conservation Stewardship Program*. **The Farmer's Guide goes into even more detail about the program than what is provided in this Information Alert.**

[Download the comprehensive guide from our website.](#)

The Farmers' Guide is intended to help family farmers, ranchers, and foresters understand the CSP enrollment process. In addition, it provides clear information on conservation activities eligible for CSP payments to improve conservation performance and environmental benefits.

The new *Farmers' Guide* includes step-by-step enrollment guidance, key definitions, producer profiles, and helpful hints for accessing the program now that it has been revised by the 2014 Farm Bill.

It also includes a detailed look at the program's use under the 2008 Farm Bill (from 2009 through 2013). This data section includes analysis of program participation by geographic region, land use type, commodity type, and the top conservation practices and enhancements chosen by farmers and ranchers who have enrolled in the program.

The *Farmers' Guide to the Conservation Stewardship Program* is available for download on our website on our publications page at <http://sustainableagriculture.net/publications>.

Printed copies of the *Guide* can also be purchased. To inquire about ordering printed copies, email NSAC at intern@sustainableagriculture.net.