LET'S GO!

WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE WALKING INTO YOUR LOCAL NRCS FIELD OFFICE

1. WHERE TO GO?

Find your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office.

SCAN HERE:

2. WHAT KIND OF PROGRAMS AND ASSISTANCE DOES NRCS OFFER?

- Are you looking for financial assistance?
  - If yes, programs like Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), or Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) might be a good fit – see more details below.
  - Even if your answer is no, NRCS still might be able to provide you with Conservation Technical Assistance to help you with conservation planning.
- Are you already using conservation practices on your operation and looking to "level-up" and make even more progress?
  - Check into CSP. Generally, you would enroll your entire operation and use enhancements to improve your conservation efforts to the next level.
- Are you dealing with specific issues or just getting started with conservation?
  - EQIP might be a great option! This program provides financial assistance for many different management practices and can be done on an individual field or tract of land.
  - Another option is RCPP. Depending on your location, additional financial assistance for specific practices may be available (sometimes at a higher payment rate) if there are high-priority resource concerns in your area.
- Your local NRCS field office staff will discuss your option with you and help determine which program is the best fit. They can also share specific programs available in your area.

3. HOW DO I KNOW IF I AM ELIGIBLE FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE?

- You are eligible if you can answer yes to these four questions:
  - Do you own or rent and actively manage the acres you want to enroll in the program?
  - Is your land in compliance with wetland and highly erodible land requirements?
  - Is your adjusted gross income less than $900,000?
  - Are your records with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) up to date?

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4. WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT WHEN I WALK IN THE FIELD OFFICE DOOR AND SPEAK TO A NRCS STAFF MEMBER?

- Be prepared to answer questions about your current management practices, problem areas or concerns you've been dealing with, and your goals and objectives for the future.
- The NRCS staff member will take a full inventory of possible issues and problems (called resource concerns) on the land. They may identify additional practices that could help address those concerns.
- Even if you think you know the solution to your problem, keep an open mind to suggestions and alternative solutions from the NRCS conservation planner.

5. AFTER MY FIRST VISIT AND DISCUSSION WITH A CONSERVATION PLANNER, WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

- Expect additional conversations and even a field visit by the NRCS conservation planner as they prepare conservation plans and solutions to present to you. Some programs involve a more detailed follow-up interview to discuss your operation.
- You choose which plan, or practices, make the most sense for you. Keep in mind that only a certain number of financial assistance applications will be funded, and priority typically goes to plans that address resource concerns to the greatest extent.
- Applications are accepted year-round, but there are certain times of the year that the process might be quicker due to internal NRCS deadlines. Talk to your local office for more details.

6. IF MY APPLICATION GETS SELECTED, WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT?

- Your selected conservation plan moves into implementation. Follow the guidelines outlined in the conservation practice standard for each practice.
- You will pay for expenses up front but will receive financial assistance payments after completion each year. Payment rates are set by each state and vary by practice.
- Remember that there are contract requirements to ensure that taxpayer dollars are used responsibly.