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Press Release

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USDA selects first projects of new, innovative program

Champaign, IL Jan. 14, 2015—Today State Conservationist Ivan Dozier announced the selected 2015 projects and partners for NRCS' newest option, the Regional Conservation Partnership Program, or RCPP. Three Illinois projects will serve as the first of many science-based public-private collaborative efforts to further natural resource success and solve ecological problems. "It is exciting to announce these landmark projects and to meet with the partners and players who will make them happen," Dozier said.

The process for applying and developing proposals is highly competitive—organizations submitted more than 600 proposals nationwide. Numbers like that indicate two things—there are serious resource needs on the land and a high level of interest in the new program model.

"The best part about the new program is that it's a trifecta. We can address real, relevant concerns on the land, local Illinois farmers get the help and funds they need to do it, and private organizations and partners with similar goals leverage their funds with those from the Federal Government. We'll be able to do good things and do more of it."

NRCS hopes success with this model will become the future solution for solving soil, water, and other local problems Illinois agriculture faces today and tomorrow.

Project Name	Resource Concern	Lead Partner	Key Solution Used
Conservation Cropping Systems for Improving Soil Health (State Level RCPP)	Soil Health, Water Quality, Soil Erosion	Illinois Dept. of Ag Bureau of Land & Water	Farm Specific Practices-- Cover Crops, No-Till & Nutrient Management Strategies
BMP Implementation for Nutrient & Sediment Loss Reduction (State Level RCPP)	Soil Erosion, Water Quality	Macon County Soil & Water Conservation District	Edge-of-field BMPs: Drainage Water Management, Bio-Reactors, & Saturated Buffer strips
Shorebird Conservation Acreage via Drainage Water Runoff Control (Critical Conservation Area RCPP)	Migratory bird habitat, Water Quality, Crop Production	U of I's Dept. of Natural Resources & Environmental Sciences (NRES)	Drainage Water Management

RCPP is a 5-year \$1.2 billion USDA commitment; projects not selected in this first year may be eligible in subsequent years," Dozier said. For more information on Illinois RCPP projects, visit www.il.nrcs.usda.gov. The next announcement for program funding for fiscal year 2016 will be made in upcoming months. To learn about technical and financial assistance available through conservation programs, visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/GetStarted or local USDA service center.