



RICE STEWARDSHIP

Sustaining the Future of Rice



WORKING RICELANDS

WATER

WILDLIFE



*A Project Under the USDA
Natural Resources Conservation Service's
Regional Conservation Partnership Program*

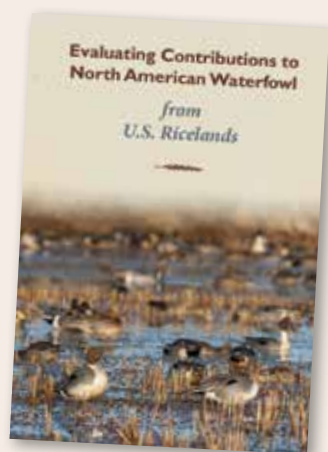
August 2015



OUR VISION REMAINS UNCHANGED, AND WITH PROOF OF PROGRESS OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS, WE HAVE A SOLID FOUNDATION FOR POSITIVE CONSERVATION OUTCOMES GOING FORWARD.

RICE STEWARDSHIP: SUSTAINING THE FUTURE OF RICE

More information on conservation values of ricelands, including 2014 National Rice RCPP proposal, can be found at www.ducks.org/ricelands



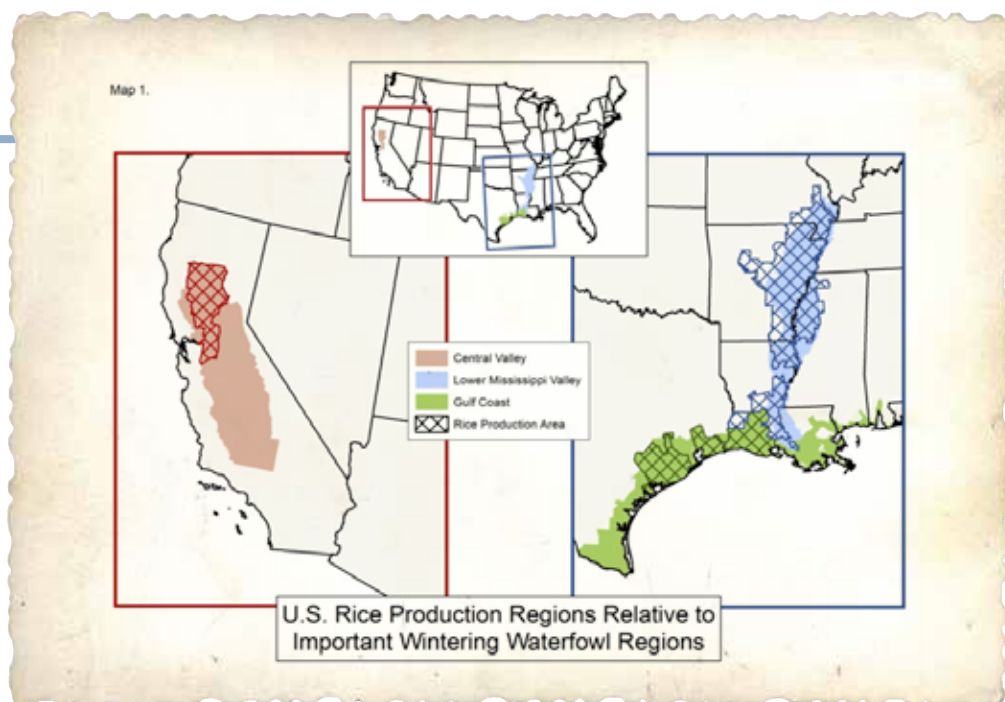
USA Rice and Ducks Unlimited, Inc. (DU) formed a strategic partnership in February 2013, with a vision to conserve three critical natural resources in North America; working ricelands, water, and wetland wildlife. As the most widely consumed grain, rice, sustains about half of the world's population and is a critical dietary staple on which billions depend. Water, our most valuable natural resource, must be conserved for the environment, agriculture, and industry. Wetland wildlife such as ducks and geese thrive on riceland habitats which are estimated to provide up to 35% of the forage needed across primary migration and wintering landscapes.

New Approach – More Partners

The 2014 Farm Bill authorized the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to create the new conservation program known as the Regional

Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). The RCPP competitively awards funds to conservation projects designed by local partners specifically for their regions. Eligible partners include universities, non-profit organizations, local and tribal governments and others joining with agricultural and conservation organizations and producers to invest money, manpower and materials to their proposed initiatives. With participating partners investing along with the NRCS, \$1.2 billion in funding over the life of the five-year program can leverage an additional \$1.2 billion from partners for a total of \$2.4 billion for conservation; \$400 million in NRCS funding was made available in 2014, with approximately \$200 million per year thereafter. Through RCPP, partners propose conservation projects to improve water use efficiency, water quality, wildlife habitat, and other related natural resources on private lands.

The distribution of U.S. rice production regions relative to the most important areas for wintering waterfowl in North America. Areas of rice production within a Joint Venture are indicated by cross-hatching.

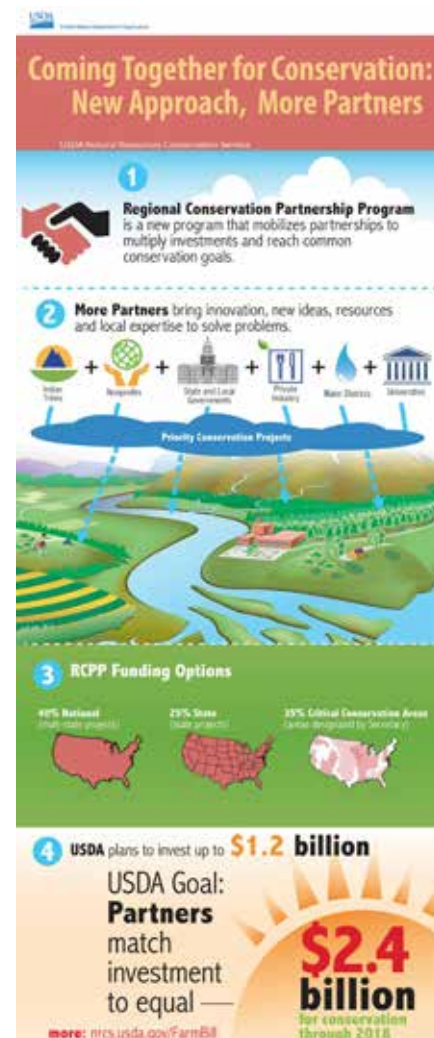


USA Rice and Ducks Unlimited along with 40-plus agriculture and conservation partners were successful in securing \$10 million in RCPP funding to benefit rice producers across all rice producing states. The project proposal – Rice Stewardship Partnership - Sustaining the Future of Rice – provides NRCS funding to rice producers for the planning, design and delivery of conservation practices on working ricelands. The funding bolsters the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) starting in 2016.

First of its kind – this is the first time that an entire commodity crop worked to establish a conservation program developed solely for its producers. The project offers rice producers several on-farm conservation options focused on water quantity, water quality, and wildlife habitat, all while trending to a better bottom line.

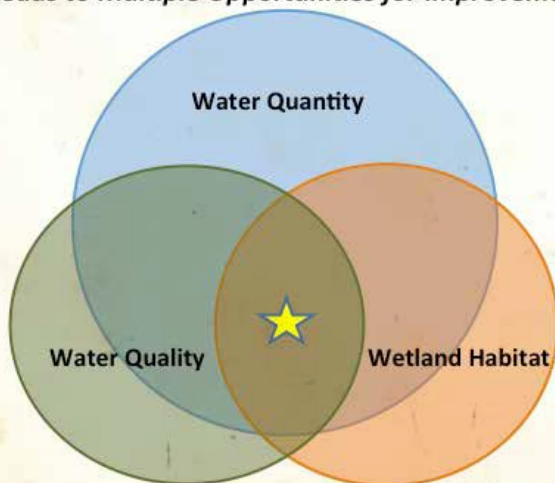
State By State Approach & Connection to NRCS Field Offices

Specific National Rice RCPP sign-up dates for EQIP will vary state by state beginning as early as mid-August 2015. USA Rice, DU, NRCS, and partners will notify rice producers of the specific dates as they are set. Interested rice producers will sign-up in local NRCS Field Offices as normal and inform NRCS that the application falls under National Rice RCPP - *Rice Stewardship Partnership - Sustaining the Future of Rice*. These new RCPP funds are in addition to regular EQIP funding in the rice producing states. Also in order to ensure RCPP funds go to rice producers, and as many rice producers as possible, USA Rice, DU, and NRCS are developing state-specific screening and ranking criteria targeted to working ricelands and water and wildlife conservation.



Linkage Among Natural Resources Concerns

Leads to Multiple Opportunities for Improvements



Increasing the level of conservation planning is the cornerstone of this RCPP effort with the goal of implementing conservation practices and management regimes that conserve the three linked resource concerns of water quantity, quality, and wildlife habitat.

Working with NRCS or partner planners, producers will select EQIP practices specifically tailored for their operations. While the full suite of NRCS practices will be available, many common practices from rice growing regions are listed below:

Irrigation Practices

Irrigation Pipeline EQIP 430

Irrigation Reservoir EQIP 436

Irrigation Water Management EQIP 449

Irrigation Land Leveling EQIP 464

Pumping Plant EQIP 533

Nutrient Management

Grade Stabilization Structure EQIP 410

Drainage Water Management EQIP 554

Structure for Water Control EQIP 587

Nutrient Management EQIP 590

Integrated Pest Management EQIP 595

Wildlife

Wetland Wildlife Management EQIP 644

Shallow Water Management
for Wildlife EQIP 646

Early Succession

Habitat Management EQIP 647

PARTNERS

USA Rice and Ducks Unlimited proudly thank the following organizations for their support and for being partners in this effort (* reflects key cash contributions):

Agri Drain Corporation

Arkansas Assn. Conservation Districts

American Rice Inc.*

Anheuser Busch

Arkansas Rice Federation

Arkansas Rice Research & Promotion Board

Arkansas Chapter – The Nature Conservancy
BASF*

Bunge North America

California Rice Research & Promotion Board

California Rice Commission

Central Valley Joint Venture

Delta Council

Delta Plastics

Delta Wildlife

Dow AgroSciences

Farmers Rice Mill*

Field to Market

Garden Highway Mutual Water Company

Gulf Coast Joint Venture

Horizon Ag

Kellogg

Louisiana Rice Mill

Louisiana Rice Producers Assn.

Louisiana Rice Research & Promotion Board

Lower Colorado River Authority

Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture

Louisiana State University AgCenter

MacDon Industries*

Mars

Mississippi Rice Research & Promotion Board

Missouri Department of Conservation

Missouri Rice Producers Group

National Fish & Wildlife Foundation

Northern California Water Assn.

Riceland Foods

RiceTec

Syngenta

Texas Parks & Wildlife Department

Texas Rice Producers Legislative Group

The Climate Trust

The Rice Foundation

Unilever

USA Rice Council

USA Rice Merchants' Assn.

USA Rice Millers' Assn.

USA Rice Producers' Group

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RICE PRODUCTION COUNTIES

2014 National Rice – Regional Conservation Partnership Program

Map 2.

