



NRCS & Reclamation WaterSMART Collaboration

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Landscape Conservation Initiatives

Landscape conservation initiatives (LCI) are an approach NRCS uses to deliver the right conservation assistance in the right places to achieve conservation outcomes that matter.

More specifically, LCI are an application of the NRCS areawide planning process used to address conservation priorities of regional or national significance through strategies that transcend state boundaries. LCI leverage science and partnerships to accelerate targeted delivery of technical and financial assistance to achieve conservation outcomes at a landscape scale.

About the Collaboration

- The purpose of the partnership is to maximize the benefits of the water conservation & efficiency programs of both agencies through collaboration
- Reclamation provides funding through WaterSMART Grants to irrigation and water districts for improvements to delivery systems that conserve water (lining or piping a canal).
- NRCS works with producers within the delivery system area or district to increase on-farm efficiencies and introduce conservation practices such as drip irrigation, center pivots, and cover crops.

A brief history of using EQIP funds to complement WaterSMART projects

2011 – Pilot to use EQIP funds to complement Reclamation projects began in CA.

2016 – Multi-state coordination expands to five States AZ, CA, CO, NM, and UT.

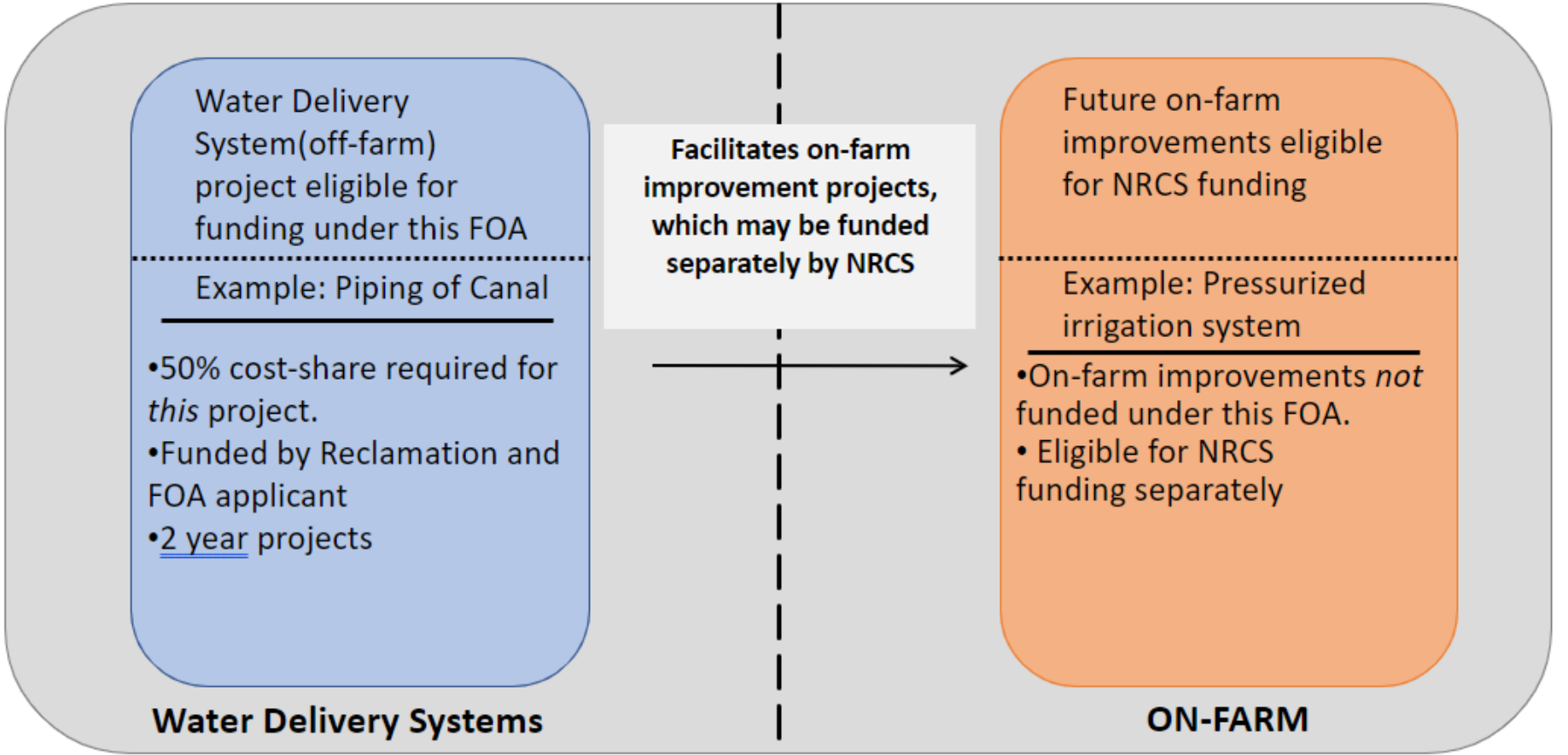
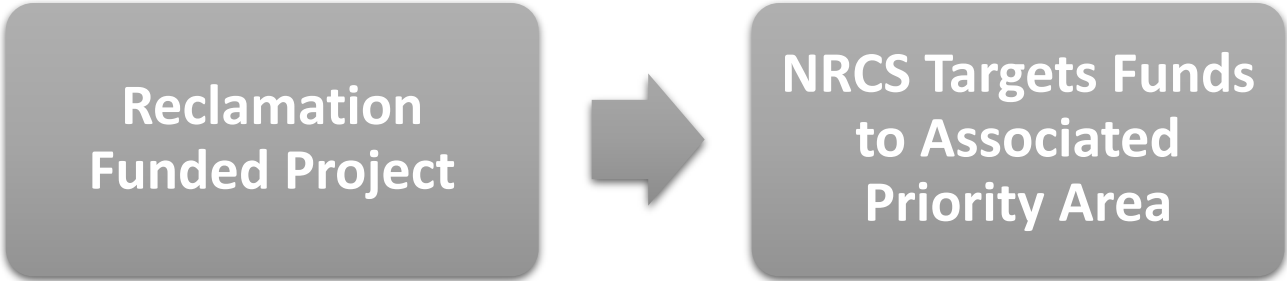
2020 – Proposal process introduced

2023 – \$25 million in EQIP FA over 37 projects in 12 states



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Soliciting Proposals

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This is an internal proposal request.

NB 300-22-41 LTP – EQIP WaterSMART Initiative (EQIP-WSI) Priority Area Solicitation FY 2023

National Bulletin: 300-22-41

Date: May 31,
2022

Subject: LTP – EQIP WaterSMART Initiative (EQIP-WSI) Priority Area
Solicitation FY 2023

Action Required By: July 15, 2022

Purpose. To provide State conservationists (STCs) and area directors with requirements for submitting proposals for new EQIP-WSI priority areas.

This bulletin applies to Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, and all U.S. Territories.

Expiration Date. September 30, 2022

Background. EQIP-WSI is a collaborative effort to target EQIP funding for water quantity and related resource concerns in a way that complements Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) investments made through WaterSMART Programs. Through WaterSMART, Reclamation supports states, tribes, and local entities as they plan for and implement actions to increase water supply through investments to modernize existing infrastructure and attention to local water conflicts. This collaboration between NRCS and Reclamation is a priority of the [National Drought Resilience Partnership \(NDRP\)](#), a federal partnership to enhance the Nation's drought resilience. Coordinating both agencies' investments can improve their cumulative impact on water conservation and drought resilience.

EQIP-WSI is implemented in priority areas as proposed by STCs and selected in a competitive process. STCs should ensure that diversity, equity, and inclusion is incorporated in the EQIP-WSI by leveraging locally led partnerships including community revitalization or renewal efforts.

Explanation. To participate in the EQIP-WSI, STCs must propose a priority area as described in this



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Elements of the proposal

- provide a map of the priority area, describe the overall water resource problem or opportunity in it, and identify the priority resource concerns;
- identify the specific Reclamation WaterSMART Program project and describe how it will be complemented by EQIP-WSI activities;
- describe how EQIP-WSI assistance will leverage community partnerships and inclusive approaches to benefit disadvantaged communities;
- identify the type and extent of conservation practices proposed for implementation in the priority area;
- estimate the number of contracts, contract acres, and EQIP FA funds needed annually for up to five years (annual budget);
- define the anticipated benefits and identify key measures to indicate a successful outcome; and
- describe how success or lessons learned will be shared with others.



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Evaluation Criteria

Priority area proposals will be evaluated based on how well the proposed activities:

- align with and complement the identified Reclamation WaterSMART Program project;
- leverage community partnerships and inclusive approaches to benefit disadvantaged communities;
- address a water quantity resource concern and any related secondary concerns;
- address the overall problem or opportunity in the area; and
- tracks progress, evaluates outcomes, and shares successes or lessons learned.

WaterSMART and EQIP Working Together



— BUREAU OF —
RECLAMATION

Funding Opportunity Announcement No. BOR-DO-21-F001

WaterSMART Grants: Water and Energy Efficiency Grants for Fiscal Year 2021



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[National Drought Resilience Partnership](#)

Current NE Project

Name: Upper Republican NRD

Available EQIP Funding in FY'23: \$250,000

Priority Area Extent in Acres: 35,155

Funding Timeline: Year 2 of 5

Proposed New Contracts: 8

Proposed Contract Acres: 6,000

Reclamation WaterSMART Funding Categories: WEEG, 2018

Complemented Project Type: Remote Water Metering

The Upper Republican NRD in Dundy, Chase, and Perkins counties, NE used Reclamation WaterSMART funds to install a remote water metering system to reduce groundwater withdrawals for irrigation by providing real-time data on water use and evaporation-transpiration losses. The improvements are expected to reduce irrigation applications on average by 15 percent. With additional NRCS assistance, crop farmers in the area will be able to further improve irrigation system water use efficiency. In addition to water conservation and drought resilience benefits, EQIP funding is expected to reduce nutrient loss and groundwater pollution and improve crop health and productivity.

[NRCS / EQIP / WaterSMART Initiative](#)

Landscape Conservation Initiatives

Summary and Questions

EQIP WaterSMART Initiative

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