

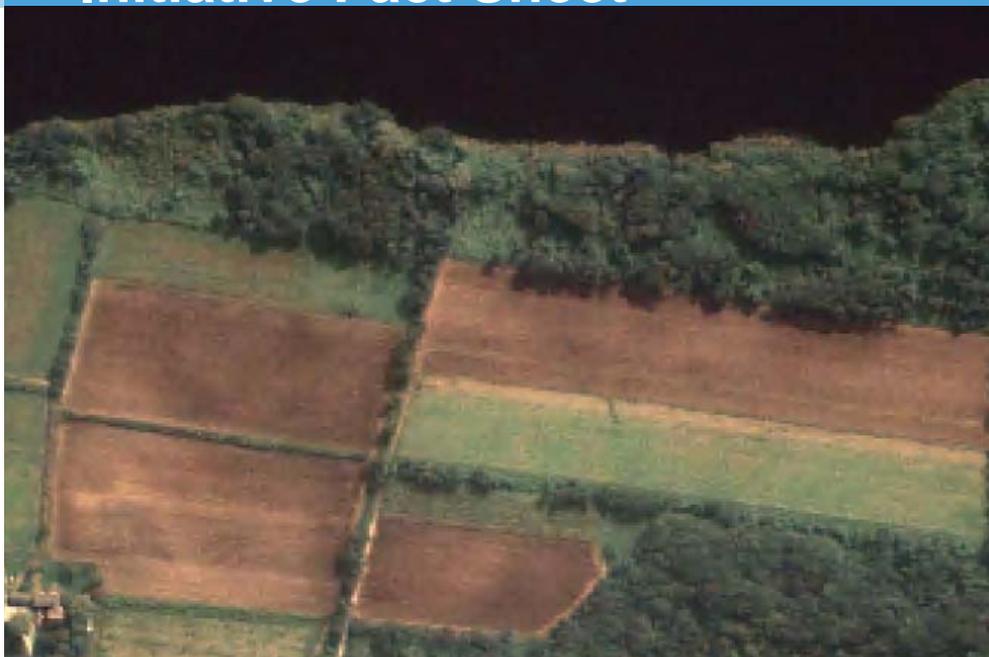
Rhode Island: Overview

Through the National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is offering financial and technical assistance to farmers and forest landowners interested in improving water quality and aquatic habitats in priority watersheds with impaired streams. NRCS will help producers implement conservation and management practices through a systems approach to control and trap nutrient and manure runoff. Qualified producers will receive assistance for installing conservation practices such as nutrient management, animal waste systems, and riparian buffers. For over 75 years, NRCS has provided agricultural producers with assistance to implement voluntary conservation practices that protect natural resources while maintaining production and profits.

Rhode Island's Priority Watersheds

Sakonnet River Watershed
 Tomaquag Brook-Pawcatuck River Watershed
 Upper East Passage Watershed

The Sakonnet River and Upper East Passage are both subwatersheds of the Narragansett Bay watershed. The Sakonnet River watershed is approximately 35,761 acres of which 23 percent is forested and 14 percent is agricultural land. About 16 percent of the land is developed. The Upper East Passage watershed is approximately 18,552 acres of which 15 percent is forested and 7 percent is agricultural land. About 17 percent is developed land. The Tomaquag Brook-Pawcatuck River watershed is a subwatershed of the Upper Pawcatuck River watershed. The Tomaquag



Riparian forest buffers provide an opportunity in removing excess nutrients and sediment from entering surface waters.

Photo: 2006 FSA NAIP Imagery

Brook-Pawcatuck River watershed is approximately 36,499 acres of which 75 percent is forested, 5 percent is agricultural land, and 11 percent is developed land.

The type of land use in a watershed has a direct effect on water quality. Pollutants such as nutrients and bacteria from leaking septic systems, oil from automobiles, sediment from construction, and run off from impervious surfaces negatively affect nearby

The National Water Quality Initiative will work in selected watersheds to help farmers and forest landowners improve water quality and aquatic habitats in impaired streams.

water bodies. Agricultural materials such as fertilizer and manure can also contribute pollutants to a watershed. Riparian forest buffers provide an opportunity in removing excess nutrients and sediment from entering surface

waters. Encroachment into our streamside forest buffers has reduced the extent of streambank protection resulting in an adverse effect on water quality.

Conservation Funding and Practices

NRCS conservation professionals will provide technical assistance and planning tools to determine which conservation actions will provide the best results to improve water quality on your land. Nutrient management systems, erosion control, conservation tillage, pest management, and buffers systems are just some of the practices being offered as part of the National Water Quality Initiative. To help install these conservation practices, financial assistance to share in the cost of these conservation practices is available through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

Partnerships

NRCS identified priority watersheds through the help of local partnerships

and state water quality agencies. Partners sometimes offer financial assistance in addition to NRCS programs. NRCS will continue to coordinate with local and state agencies, conservation districts, nongovernmental organizations and others to implement this initiative. This strategic approach will leverage funds and provide streamlined assistance to help individual agricultural producers take needed actions to reduce the flow of sediment, nutrients and other runoff into impaired waterways.

Producer Benefits

Water quality conservation practices benefit agricultural producers by lowering input costs and enhancing the productivity of working lands. Conservation investments are good for all Americans because well managed farms limit pollution from runoff, produce food and fiber, sustain rural economies, and provide food security to the Nation. All across the country—farmers, ranchers and forest landowners are voluntarily taking action and putting conservation on the ground to improve water quality on millions of acres!

Public Benefits

NRCS is proud to be involved in a nationwide effort with landowners and communities to improve and protect our water resources. The landowners and farmers participating in the

initiative will receive conservation payments to work on the land in a sustainable way which provides cleaner water. In addition to the financial assistance, the land will remain productive into the future. Communities benefit by having clean waterways, safer drinking water and healthy habitat for fish and wildlife.

How to Apply

Almost every county in the Nation has a *USDA Service Center*. To get started, make an appointment at your local office. You will need to establish eligibility and farm records for your land. NRCS will help you complete an application while explaining which conservation practices are available in your watershed. Remember to check with

your local NRCS office to see if you are located in a selected watershed. All applications for funding consideration, during fiscal year 2012, must be received by June 15, 2012.

For more Information

USDA - NRCS, Rhode Island
60 Quaker Lane, Suite 46
Warwick, RI 02886

PHONE:401-822-8848

www.ri.nrcs.usda.gov



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Map: RIGIS Data Center



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Natural Resources Conservation Service

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