



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Texas Coastal Prairie Initiative and NRCS Announce Conservation Funding Opportunities for FY2023

HOUSTON, Texas, August 09, 2022—The Texas Coastal Prairie Initiative (TCPI), a Regional Conservation Partnership Program of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) award recipient, announced fiscal year 2023 assistance opportunities for agricultural producers and private landowners supporting habitat management and conservation easement projects.

Conservation Easements

Many landowners who own a farm, ranch, or natural area worry about the future of their land. Some want to preserve the Texas landscape but worry it will be lost once they are no longer able to own and manage the property. Others want to keep land in agriculture for their heirs or for other local farmers and ranchers. And many landowners want to preserve open and connected spaces to help maintain the biodiversity of the coastal prairie, provide essential wildlife habitat, and sustain a resilient landscape. Landowners who wish to maintain ownership of the land, or eventually pass the land along to their heirs or sell to a third party, have options for conserving land through voluntary conservation easements. TCPI partners seek landowners who want to permanently protect their farm or ranch land, wildlife habitat, and natural resources with conservation easements from an eligible land trust. TCPI may award up to 50% of the fair market value of the easement.

Habitat Management Practices

Landowners can support wildlife habitat and biodiversity by adopting wildlife-friendly land management practices. The TCPI expands access to NRCS funded practices that improve native plant biodiversity and improve water quality. These practices may include brush and invasive species control, native prairie restoration, wetlands enhancement, grazing management, and other practices that improve wildlife habitat on working lands. TCPI representatives are available to provide technical assistance to landowners in order to develop a conservation plan that identifies existing resources and suitable practices for their property that benefit coastal prairie

wildlife, particularly grassland and wetland birds. Upon completion of the conservation plan, financial assistance may be available to support eligible practices.

Eligibility

Farmers, ranchers, and landowners who own agricultural or natural lands within the 13-county region that includes Austin, Brazoria, Calhoun, Chambers, Colorado, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Jackson, Matagorda, Victoria, Waller, and Wharton counties are eligible to be considered for the program. NRCS policies and procedures governing participation in the Regional Conservation Partnership Program will apply to participate in TCPI financial assistance programs, and applicants must be registered with their local Farm Services Agency (FSA) office. Applicants do not need to demonstrate compliance with Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) limitations, as a blanket AGI waiver has been granted for the Texas Coastal Prairie Initiative. Compliance with all other USDA conservation provisions (highly erodible land and wetland conservation provisions) remain enforced. TCPI reserves the right to screen out applications that do not meet program objectives. Funding is limited, and TCPI may choose not to recommend any applications for funding in any application period at its discretion.

Applying for Assistance

Local TCPI partner staff will work with individual landowners who are interested in the program. Approved projects will meet eligibility requirements established by TCPI partners. Please contact TCPI by emailing tcpi-info@coastalprairieconservancy.org or through the online contact form at <https://www.prairiepartner.org/contact> in order to be contacted by a TCPI partner.

- Technical Assistance to Landowners: Year-round
- Conservation Easement Project Worksheet Due: September 15, 2022
- Habitat Management Project Worksheet Due: October 1, 2022
- TCPI to Submit Eligible Applications NRCS: November 4, 2022

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Link to [photo here](#)

Photo caption: TCPI partners are working with farmer and ranchers to conserve the highly imperiled coastal prairie ecosystem in Texas.

Photo credit: Christine Mansfield

About the Texas Coastal Prairie Initiative

The TCPI is a multi-year program, and projects not submitted by the program deadlines will be considered during the next funding period.

More information regarding the Texas Coastal Prairie Initiative may be found at www.prairiepartner.org.