

# CONSERVATION DISTRICTS AS FOREST/WATER CHAMPIONS:

## HELP PROTECT DRINKING WATER SOURCES

### NEW \$19.5 billion in Funding from the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) for Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry

This is an historical once-in-a-generation opportunity for conservation districts across the nation to help farmers, ranchers, forestland owners, and Tribes access this funding to protect drinking water sources.



- Conservation districts are the perfect forest/water champion to work with source water protection (SWP) partners, in addition to forestry agencies and NRCS, to help landowners access this funding and provide technical assistance.
- You have the expertise and trusted relationships with forest landowners.
- Climate smart agriculture and forestry practices can protect water quality and drinking water sources (link on next page and access via link at bottom of page).
- You can inform NRCS state priority source water protection areas - ask your state NRCS office for the state map and suggest new areas (link on next page and access via link at bottom of page).



### TAKE ACTION NOW!

Engage partners, develop a strategy, and then work for and with private landowners to protect and manage their forests. The vision for your watershed includes abundant, healthy forests that safeguard water quality and your drinking water

#### HEALTHY FORESTS = CLEAN DRINKING WATER

- Regulate precipitation
- Reduce flooding
- Reduce erosion
- Filter pollutants
- Recharge Ground Water
- Protect drinking water quality
- Protect drinking water quantity
- Reduce drinking water treatment costs

supply for generations to come. On the back of this page, find resources to help you and your partners plan, fund, and execute forest landowner outreach and climate smart conservation projects.

Because forests provide the perfect natural infrastructure to help protect the quality of our rivers, lakes, streams, and groundwater, they are critical to ensure the quality and quantity of drinking water for future generations.

**SOURCE WATER PROTECTION:** Your drinking water comes from either surface (streams and reservoirs) or underground

(groundwater) sources. Both are better protected when adjacent or upstream and upgradient lands are covered with healthy forests. Efforts to maintain or improve the quality and quantity of drinking water is called source water protection.

**NRCS CONSERVATION PROGRAMS AND THE INFLATION REDUCTION ACT:** The additional \$19.5 billion in funding available over the next five years for EQIP, RCPP, CSP, ACEP programs includes \$1 billion for technical assistance, and \$300 million to measure, evaluate, and quantify carbon sequestration and greenhouse gas emission reductions from conservation investment. <https://tinyurl.com/NRCSIRAFunds>

- Climate smart agriculture and forestry practices: reduce wildfire risk, store carbon, increase buffers, enhance habitat, and protect drinking water! <https://tinyurl.com/NRCSClimateSmart>
- NRCS national priority source water protection area map: delineated areas for increased cost share in each state <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/source-water-protection>

**DRINKING WATER PARTNERS:** State source water protection programs and drinking water utilities can work in partnership to:

- Share maps, water data, and information on forested lands and source water protection areas (for both surface and groundwater).
- Provide information and leverage potential funding sources.
- Assist with implementation and help target forestry initiatives and practices.
- Share information and conduct outreach to communities and landowners.

## RESOURCES

- National Source Water Collaborative [www.sourcewatercollaborative.org](http://www.sourcewatercollaborative.org)
- State Source Water Protection Programs [www.asdwa.org/source-water/](http://www.asdwa.org/source-water/)
- Southeastern Partnership for Forests & Water [www.southeasternpartnership.org/](http://www.southeasternpartnership.org/)

## TOOLS

- Tools for Engaging Landowners (TELE) <https://www.engaginglandowners.org/>
- *Forests to Faucets 2.0* US Forest Service Watershed Analysis <https://bit.ly/foreststofaucets2>
- Drinking Water Mapping Application to Protect Source Waters <https://bit.ly/EPADWMAPS>

## FUNDING

- EPA Funding Integration Tool for Source Water (FITS) [www.epa.gov/sourcewaterprotection/fits](http://www.epa.gov/sourcewaterprotection/fits)
- Southeastern Partnership Funding Page <https://southeasternpartnership.org/funding>

## EXAMPLES OF FOREST/WATER COLLABORATION

- Conservation Districts:
  - » Michigan Forests for Clean Water (MACD) <https://tinyurl.com/HuronRiverForestsWater>
  - » Montana Conservation Corps <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zD6rVwiDJ4I>
- State-Based Partnerships:
  - » Texas Partnership for Forests and Water <https://tfsweb.tamu.edu/forestsandwater/>
  - » Arkansas Forests and Drinking Water Collaborative <https://www.arforestsandwater.com/>
  - » South Carolina Forests & Water Initiative <https://www.arforestsandwater.com/>
- Watershed-Based Partnerships & Programs:
  - » Sebago Clean Waters (ME) [www.sebagocleanwaters.org/](http://www.sebagocleanwaters.org/)
  - » Upstream Matters (City of Raleigh, NC) [www.upstreammatters.org/](http://www.upstreammatters.org/)
  - » Savannah River Clean Water Fund (GA) <https://savannahrivercleanwater.org/>
  - » Colorado Forest Restoration Institute <https://cfri.colostate.edu/projects/forests-to-faucets/>

## CONTACTS FOR MORE INFORMATION AND HELP:

- » Conservation Districts - Annica McGuirk [annica-mcguirk@nacdnet.org](mailto:annica-mcguirk@nacdnet.org)
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