



# News Release

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## **USDA/NRCS is Accepting Applications for the Open Pine Landscape Restoration Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)**

**January 13, 2022** – Farmers and landowners in eight north-central Louisiana parishes are now eligible to apply for the Open Pine Landscape Restoration Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). This program focuses on improving wildlife habitat, fire management practices and addressing water quality concerns. The Open Pine Landscape RCPP offers technical and financial assistance for the next five years (2022 – 2027) for landowners interested in enhancing their private forestland.

Parishes included in the Open Pine RCPP focus area include Bienville, Claiborne, Jackson, Lincoln, Morehouse, Ouachita, Union and Webster parishes. A specific outreach focus is to ensure that historically underserved farmers and landowners participate meaningfully in this project. Farmers and landowners who submit applications to their local NRCS office by Feb. 18th will be considered for the first round of funding. Applications received after Feb. 18<sup>th</sup> will be considered in later funding periods, subject to funding availability.

**What is RCPP?** RCPP promotes coordination of NRCS conservation activities with like-minded conservation partners that offer value-added contributions to expand the ability to address on-farm, watershed, and regional natural resource concerns. Through RCPP, NRCS invests with partners to implement projects that provide innovative and creative solutions to conservation challenges and provide measurable improvements and outcomes.

“RCPP is a unique program that leverages non-federal investments brought by conservation partners to accelerate conservation in selected focused areas,” explained Louisiana NRCS State Conservationist Chad Kacir. “Utilizing this approach with partnerships like the lead partner on this project, The American Bird Conservancy, helps NRCS maximize the use of resources to improve locally identified conservation concerns.”

**What wildlife species benefit from the Open Pine Landscape RCPP?** Recovery of species of conservation concern include: Northern Bobwhite, Eastern Wild Turkey, Henslow’s and LeConte’s sparrows, Louisiana Pine Snake, Gopher Tortoise and the Red-cockaded Woodpecker.

**Who can apply?** Individuals and other entities actively engaged in agricultural production are eligible to participate in RCPP. RCPP offers a continuous application sign-up. However, to be considered for first-round funding applications must be received by Feb. 18. Applicants can sign up for the 2022 program year by contacting their local USDA NRCS service center.

All USDA Service Centers are open for business, please call your local service center to schedule an appointment click <https://offices.usda.gov> to find your local USDA/NRCS office.

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