# Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Program Opportunities

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<tr>
<th>Environmental Quality Assurance Program (EQIP)</th>
<th>Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Financial and technical assistance for conservation work for identified resource concerns</td>
<td>- Maintain and improve existing conservation work.</td>
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<td>- Improve soil, water, plant, air, animal and related resource concerns.</td>
<td>- Willing to adopt additional conservation activities to address priority resource concerns.</td>
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<td>- Agricultural and Forest lands.</td>
<td>- The higher the performance, the higher the payment opportunity.</td>
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<td>- Competitively ranked projects.</td>
<td>- Management driven.</td>
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<td>- Multiple Fund Pool opportunities</td>
<td>- Enhancements vs Practices.</td>
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<td>- Management, vegetative and structural practices</td>
<td>- Focus on management and vegetative practices/enhancements.</td>
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Program Timeline/Deadlines – Remainder 2022

EQIP
- Sign Up - 4/1/22
- Ranking – 5/27/22
- Funding – 6/15/22
- Obligation – 9/2/22

CSP
- Sign Up - 4/1/22
- Ranking – 5/27/22
- Funding – 6/1/22
- Obligation – 8/5/22
EQIP vs CSP – Which Way to Go?

**EQIP**
- New to conservation planning
- New to working with NRCS
- Just in need of some structural help, and or management.

**CSP**
- Has been working with NRCS/EQIP already
- Ready to take current conservation planning to another level
- Must include all eligible land that is under applicant’s control
- Must meet or exceed two resource concerns on all land uses at time of contract
- Must agree to meet or exceed stewardship threshold for at least one additional resource concern by end of contract.
EQIP

- Multiple Ranking Pools (These are just a few)
  - Regional – includes Grazing lands and Forest Health
  - CAPS – Conservation Activity Plan vs Design and Implementation Activity
    - Utilize Technical Service Providers (TSP)
    - Examples:
      - 106 Forest Management Plan
      - 165 Forest Management Design and Implementation Activity
      - 159 Grazing Management Design and Implementation Activity
      - 160 Prescribed Burning Design and Implementation Activity
  - Catastrophic Fire
  - Wildlife Friendly Livestock Pond
  - Tribal
  - Historically Underserved
    - Beginning Farmer/Rancher
    - Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers
More on EQIP

- Voluntary Conservation Program for technical and financial assistance
- Purpose is to address natural resource concerns
- Under the main categories of soil, water, air, plants, animals and energy, there are 47 resource concerns.
- Competitively Ranked
- Not all proposed projects get funded
- Payment rates are incentive payments based on specific practice scenarios.

[Environmental Quality Incentives Program | NRCS California (usda.gov)]
Fuel Load Management

- Degraded Plant Condition
  - Plant productivity and health
  - Plant structure and composition
- Plant Pressure
  - Plant pest pressure
- Fire Management
  - Wildfire hazard from biomass accumulation
Grassland Practices

**Primary Practices**
- 314 - Brush Management
- 315 - Herbaceous Weed Treatment
- 528 - Prescribed Grazing
- 338 - Prescribed Burning

**Supporting Practices**
- 382 - Fence
- 614 - Watering Facility (tank or trough)
- 516 - Livestock Pipeline
- 533 - Pumping Plant
- 642 - Well
- 574 - Spring Development
314 Brush Management Scenarios

- Hand Tools – lop and scatter
- Mechanical-masticate
- Chemical – spot treatment
Typical Brush Management Multi Approach

- Masticate brush 1st year
- Follow up with 1 to 2 years chemical spot treatment for re-sprout control
- Approach and payment scenario is based on infestation level and size of woody species
- *Not to facilitate a land use change
Herbaceous Weed Treatment Scenarios

- Hand Tools – Weed Wrench, Hoe
- Mechanical – Timed Mowing
- Chemical – Boom, spot or aerial spray
Typical Herbaceous Weed Treatment

- Chemical application up to 3 years for specific species
- Timed mowing or hand pulling first year, followed by spot chemical treatment for 1 or 2 years.
- Each approach is species specific and can be a multi-approach path.
EQIP Prescribed Grazing Payment Scenario Options

- Basic Range $2.90/acre
- Intensive Range $3.94/acre
- Basic Pasture $12.80/acre
- Intensive Pasture $20.93/acre
- Range Deferment $9.47/acre
- Habitat Management $4.49/acre

- What’s missing……..Targeted Grazing!
- ***528 Targeted Grazing scenario not available under FY22 EQIP 528 practice.
Forestry Practices
(not a complete list)

- Forest Management Plan – 106
- Forest Stand Improvement - 666
- Prescribed Burn Plan – 160
- Prescribed Burning – 338
- Woody Residue Treatment – 384
- Tree/Shrub Pruning - 660
- Fuel Break - - 383
- Fire Break - 394
- Mulching – 490
- Brush Management – 314
- Herbaceous Weed Treatment – 315
- Tree and Shrub Planting – 612
- Silvopasture – 381
- Windbreak and Shelterbelt Establishment/Renovation - 380
Core Forestry Practice Timeline Example

- CAP 106 -- Planning
  - 666 -- Thinning or masticating
  - 384 -- Slash cleanup
  - 660 -- Limbing
    - 490 -- Grub/hand chem planting spot
  - 612 -- Planting
    - 314 (or 490) – Resprout control
CSP Program Eligibility

Client Eligibility
- Must be owner or other tenant per the Farm Service Agency (FSA)
- Can be persons, tribes, entities, LLCs, etc
- Meet adjusted Gross Income Limit
- Have effective control of land offered for CSP.
  - Ownership, written lease or other means of documented land control for duration of 5-year contract.

Land Eligibility
- Private Agricultural lands
  - Pasture
  - Range
  - Crop
- Associate Ag Lands (new)
- Farmstead (new)
- Non-Industrial Private Forestlands (NIPF)
- Agricultural Indian Lands
- Public land associated with above with effective control and working part of operation
- All eligible land must be enrolled
CSP Contract Information

- 5 Year contract length
- Meet or exceed threshold: Must have at least two resource concerns addressed already on all land uses and be willing to address one additional resource concern by end of contract on one land use.
- Existing Activity payments:
  - EAP1 is based on land use. Example: Rangeland gets $1/acre
  - EAP2 is based on number of resource concerns met at time of application submittal: $300 per Resource Concern
- Conservation Activities:
  - Enhancements
  - Bundles
  - Practices
- Conservation Stewardship Program | NRCS California (usda.gov)
CSP Enhancements

There are a total of 174 national enhancements available in FY22. They are derived from 45 conservation practices (out of 168):

7 Structural Practices
18 Vegetative Practices
20 Management Practices
CSP Enhancement Grazing Options for Fuel Load Reduction

- E528A – Maintaining Quality and Quantity of Forage for Animal Health and Productivity
- E528T – Grazing to Reduce Wildfire Risk on Forests
- E314A – Brush Management to Improve Structure and Composition Wildlife Habitat
- E315A – Herbaceous Weed Treatment to Create Desirable Plant Communities Consistent with Ecological Site
- E383A – Grazing Maintained Fuel Break to Reduce the Risk of Fire
CSP Rangeland Financials Example

5000 ac livestock grazing operation
Existing Stewardship (EAP1) = 5000 X $1.00 = $5000/year
National resource concerns met at time of application = 5
Existing stewardship (EAP2) = $300 X 5 + $1500/year
Total existing activity payment = $5000 + $1500 = $6500/yr.

528 Prescribed Grazing – year 1 - Range Basic @ $0.45/acre = $2,250
E528A – Maintaining Quantity and Quality Forage – years 2-5 @ $4.58/ac = $22,900
E315A – Herbaceous Weed Treatment – year 5 @ $14.48/ac X 100 ac/yr. = $1,448

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{EAP1&2} &= 6500/\text{year} = 32,500 \\
528 &= 2250 \text{ for 1 year} = 2,250 \\
E528A &= 22,900 \times 4 = 91,600 \\
E315A &= 1,448 \text{ for 1 year} = 1,448 \\
\text{Contract Total} &= 127,798
\end{align*}
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Contract Total = $127,798
CSP Enhancements on Non-Industrial Private Forestlands (Not complete list)

- E338A – Strategically Planned Patch Burning for Grazing Distribution and Wildlife Habitat
- E338B – Short Interval Burns to Promote a Healthy Herbaceous Plant Community
- E381A – Silvopasture to Improve Wildlife Habitat
- E383A – Grazing Maintained Fuel break to Reduce Risk of Wildfire
- E384A – Biochar Production for Woody Residue
- E612B – Planting for High Carbon Sequestration Rate
- E612C – Establishing Tree/Shrub Species to Restore Native Plant Communities
- E666D – Forest Management to Enhance Understory Vegetation
- E666E – Reduce Height of the Forest Understory to Reduce Wildfire Risk
- E666G – Reduce Forest Density and Manage Understory Along Roads to limit Wildfire Risk
CSP Non-Industrial Private Forestland Financials Example

1000 ac Non-Industrial Private Forestland Operation:
Existing Stewardship (EAP1) = 1000 X $.50 = $500/year
National resource concerns met at time of application = 5
Existing stewardship (EAP2) = $300 X 5 + $1500/year
Total existing activity payment = $500 + $1500 = $2000/yr.

E666F – Reduce Forest Stand Density and Manage Understory Along Roads to limit Wildfire
Risk and Improve Habitat - year 3 @ $334.28/ac X 50 acres = $16,714
E314A – Brush Management to Improve Wildlife Habitat
year 1 @ $21.50/ac X 200 ac/yr. = $4,300

EAP1&2 = $2,000/year = $ 10,000
E666F = $16,714 for 1 year = $ 16,714
E314A = $4,300 for 1 year = $ 4,300
Contract Total = $31,014
NRCS supports, has authority, and funds prescribed burning on non-Federal lands.

Focus on conifer, oak woodland and rangeland settings.

Burn Plans are required for planning prescribed burning under EQIP.

Burn plans are developed by CalFire or qualified NWCG Fire Boss. (New policy under development to expand pool of burn plan writers)

NRCS Staff may participate in prescribed burning planning, and on the ground implementation.

*NRCS staff must have job approval authority (JAA) to participate in any level of prescribed burning.
Core Prescribe Burn Practices

- 160 – Prescribed Burn Plan
- 338 – Prescribed Burn
- 394 – Firebreak – (for perimeter control)
- 660 – Pruning – (pre-fire treatment)
- 384 – Residue Treatment – (pre-fire brush crush)
- ***Incentive payments are based on size and complexity for many practices.