



Conservation Security Program 2006

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Conservation Security Program

Today's Topics:

- **What is CSP?**
- **Getting Ready to Apply**
- **The Application Interview**
- **How Do I Benefit?**



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Conservation Security Program



What is CSP?



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Conservation Security Program



- **Voluntary program authorized by the 2002 Farm Bill**
- **Rewards producers already applying and documenting high levels of conservation and management**
- **Ability to earn payments by adding and/or expanding conservation activities**

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Conservation Security Program

“CSP gives us the opportunity to reward those working conservationists who are trying to do leading-edge conservation, going beyond the minimum conservation requirements and really trying to reach for the stars in terms of what you can do with conservation,”

–NRCS Chief Bruce Knight, Ag Web, March 22, 2003



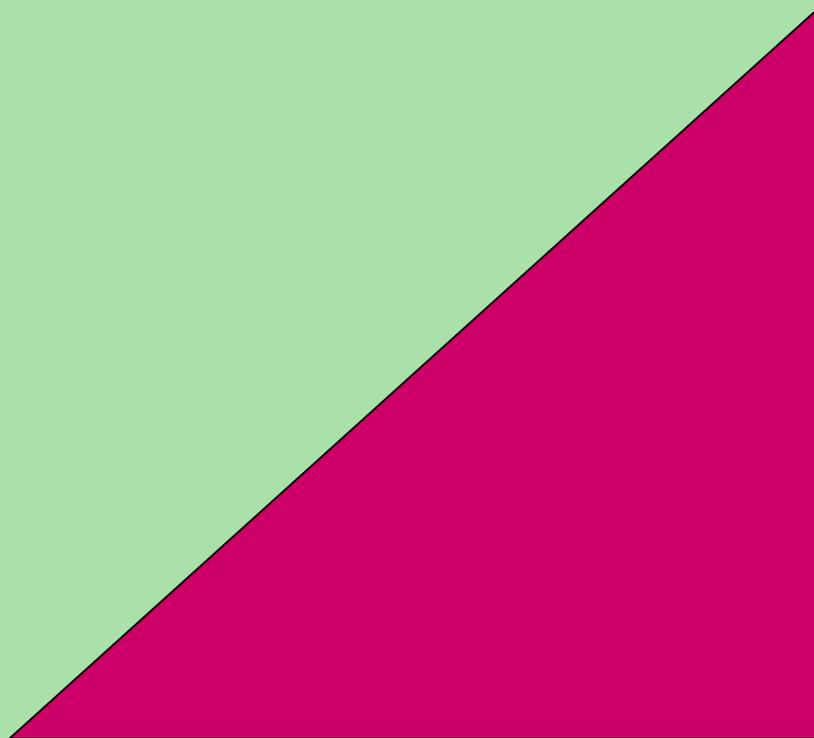
Four Payment Components

- An annual **stewardship** component for maintaining the current level of soil and water conservation treatment
- An annual **existing practice** component for maintaining existing conservation practices
- One-time **new practice** component for additional practices
- **Enhancement** payments for exceptional conservation effort

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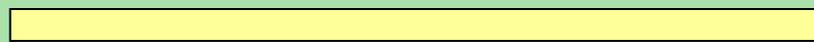
CSP Payment Components



Enhancement Payment



New Practice Payment



Existing Practice Payment



Stewardship Payment

Basic Payments

- Stewardship payment for land that meets soil and water quality criteria
- Existing practice payment for maintaining existing conservation practices on the farm
- Payment amounts are based on how much of your operation qualifies and the land use
- Payments are made annually on a per-acre basis.

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New Practice Payment

- 50% cost-share to install practices that help more land become eligible for the program in future years.
 - Contour buffer strips, windbreaks, or vegetative barriers
 - Critical area planting
 - Field border or filter strip
 - Riparian herbaceous cover
 - Use exclusion fencing
 - Pasture or hay planting
 - Stream crossing for livestock access

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Enhancement Payments

- Enhancements are activities that provide environmental benefits.
 - They can be actions already being done, or activities that you agree to perform in the future.
- Enhancement payments make up the largest part of the total CSP payment.

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Getting Ready to Apply

- Basic Eligibility – Person
- Basic Eligibility – Land

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Person Eligibility

The Applicant must:

- have an active interest in the operation
- control the land for life of contract
- share risks and be entitled to share in profits/crops/livestock

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Land Eligibility

Land must be:

- Privately owned
- Predominantly in the watershed
- Used for soil-based agricultural production
- In compliance with HEL/wetland provisions

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Land Eligibility

- Cropland must meet minimum soil quality and water quality criteria
 - Soil Conditioning Index
 - Water Quality Tool
- Pasture must be managed to
 - Balance forage to animal units
 - Control access to water courses

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Land Eligibility

- Higher payment levels and enhancement payments for higher levels of existing treatment
 - Must be documented in workbook
- Potential for higher future payments with additional treatments or activities

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Summary

- Are you eligible?
- Is your land eligible?
- Have you achieved treatment requirements for soil and water?
- Are you doing or are you willing to do an additional resource enhancements?

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Application Overview

- Pre Sign-up: 1. Operation Delineation
 2. CSP Self-Assessment Workbook
- During Sign-up: 3. Apply in Person
 4. NRCS Interview
- Post Sign-up: 5. National Selection of Contracts

Application Process – Step 1 Pre Sign-up



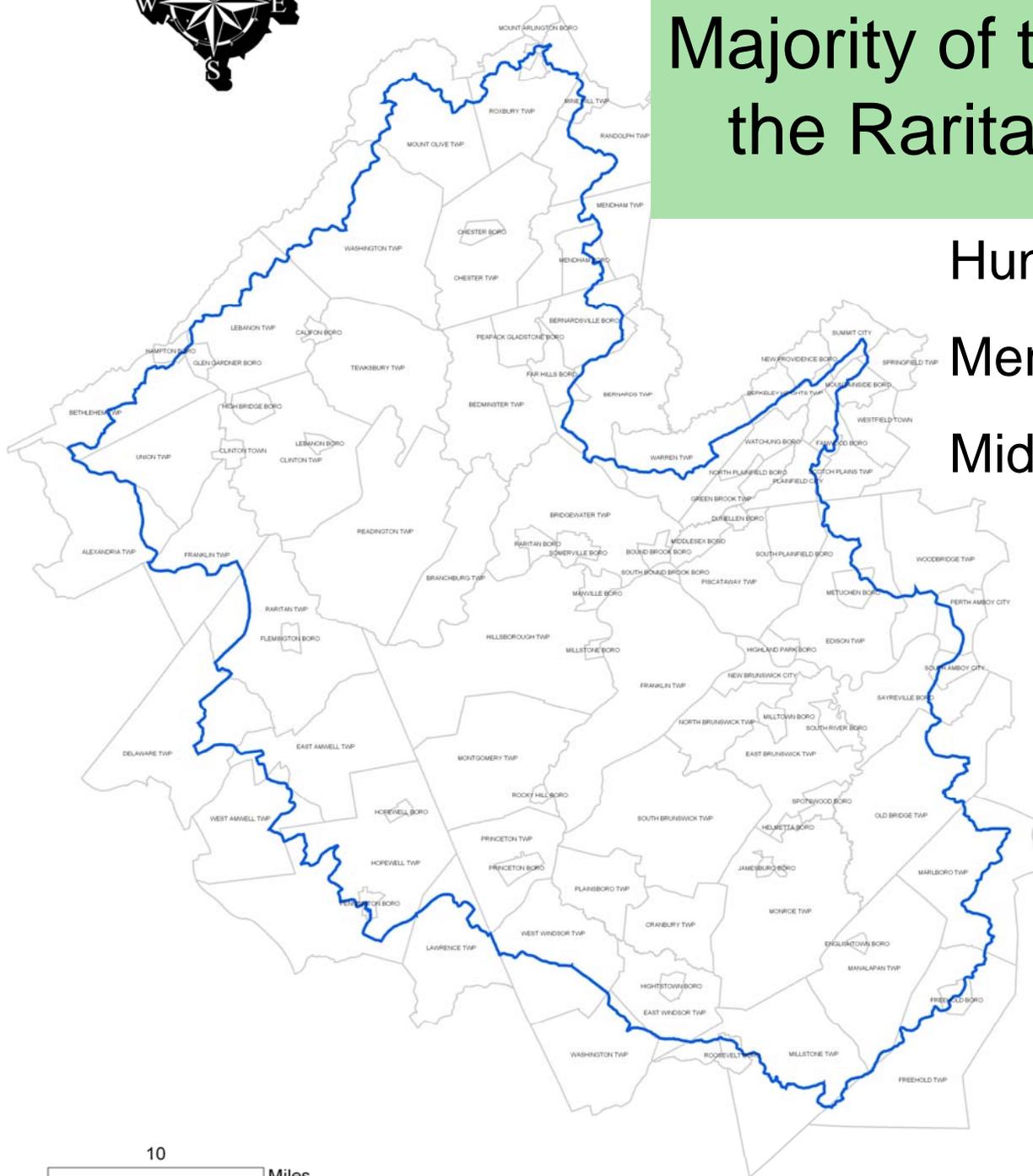
- **Delineate the operation**
 - Can be owned or rented but applicant needs to control for length of contract
- **Only one contract per applicant**

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Majority of the operation in the Raritan Watershed



Hunterdon

Mercer

Middlesex



Monmouth

Morris

Somerset

10

Miles





Passaic Watershed

Raritan Watershed



Application Process - Step 2

Pre Sign-up

- **Complete the Self-Assessment Workbook and Benchmark Inventory**
 - Available Online
 - Available as paper copy
- Workbook answers will be used to determine basic eligibility, and potential for additional acres and enhancement payments
- You do not have to answer “yes” to every question in the book to be eligible for CSP!

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Application Process – Step 3 During Sign-Up

- **Apply for the program during the sign-up period**
- Bring with you -
 - Completed workbook
 - Completed benchmark inventory worksheets
 - Map delineating the operation
 - All required eligibility forms

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Application Process – Step 3 During Sign-up

- NRCS will review your information, make appropriate copies, and **schedule an interview**
- Interviews are scheduled in the order applications are received
- Interview dates and times are not negotiable

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Application Process – Step 4 During Sign-up

- At the interview, **bring with you** -
 - Soil and manure tests
 - Crop or Grazing records
 - Location of existing practices

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Application Process – Step 4 During Sign-up

NRCS determines

- **basic eligibility**; based on
 - Soil Conditioning Index
 - Water Quality Tool
 - Review of Records
- **enrollment category**; based on
 - practices in place,
 - soil and/or pasture condition

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Application Process – Step 5 Post Sign-up

- NRCS (nationally) selects categories to be funded
 - Amount of funds available limit how many categories are funded
- Funded applicants complete and sign a Stewardship Plan (CSP contract)
- 1st year payment is made

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How Do I Benefit?

- The Magic of Enhancements
- Getting Funded: Tiers and Categories
- Typical Examples

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Enhancement Activities

- Examples include:
 - Using no-till for crop production
 - Maintaining grass buffers along field boundaries
 - Planting legume cover crops
 - Using organic pesticides or non-chemical control methods
 - Managing, conserving and/or producing energy on your farm

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Enhancement Payments

- Existing enhancements are paid on a sliding scale – get paid a lot now for what you’re already doing
- New enhancements are paid on a straight scale – get paid more as you add more activities

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CSP Payment Tiers

Tier I. Protect soil and water quality on part of your operation

Tier II. Protect soil and water quality on all of your operation

Tier III. Protect all natural resources concerns on all of your operation

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Other Resource Concern

An additional resource concern must be addressed in order to qualify for Tier II or Tier III payments.

- The selected concern for the Raritan is ***Excessive Nutrients and Organics in Surface Water***

This concern is addressed by having adequate buffers around fields and along stream corridors.

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Funding Categories

- Five categories A – E
 - Applicants ranked from the highest level of stewardship (A) to basic eligibility (E)
 - Based on how many existing practices and activities in place on the farm treat the soil, water and wildlife resources

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Funding Categories

- Document existing practices on your benchmark inventory worksheets
- See CSP Sign-up Announcement for details on the categories for 2006

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Payment Caps

- Tier I - \$20,000 annually
- Tier II - \$35,000 annually
- Tier III - \$45,000 annually

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Interested producers should **prepare now** and sign-up at their local NRCS office during the sign-up period.

Freehold Service Center (732) 462-0075 x 3
4000 Kozloski Road

Frenchtown Service Center (908) 782-4614 x 3
687 Pittstown Road

Hackettstown Service Center (908) 852-2576 x 3
101 Bilby Road

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