

A sunset scene with a bright sun low on the horizon, casting a warm glow over a dark landscape. The sky transitions from deep blue at the top to orange and yellow near the sun. The text is overlaid in a bold, yellow font with a black outline.

Conservation Update

2002 Farm Bill

**Farm Security and Rural
Investment Act of 2002**

Private Lands Conservation

- GRP and EQIP updates
- Conservation Policy Continuum
- Conservation Security Program
- Management Intensity
- Vision for the Future

Grasslands Reserve Program

As required by statute, GRP's emphasis is on supporting grazing operations, plant and animal biodiversity, and grassland and land containing shrubs or forbs under the greatest threat of conversion. All three areas of emphasis were used in the allocation formula to States.

Grasslands Reserve Program

- Funding in FY 2003 - \$69,127,000
- Funding in FY 2004 - \$69,393,700
- Section 213 of P.L. 108-7, Consolidated Appropriations Resolution Identified GRP as a “donor” program that contributed TA funding for the CRP and WRP.
- GRP contributed \$9,545,000 toward the administration of non-GRP activities in FY-2003.

Grasslands Reserve Program

■ National Enrollment Data for Easements:

■ Number of easements	106
■ Average cost/acre	\$381.95
■ Acres	78,766

Grasslands Reserve Program

■ National Enrollment Data for Rental Agreements:

■ Number of agreements	688
■ Average cost/acre	\$133.90
■ Acres	162,199.3

Grasslands Reserve Program

■ Top 10 States for Easement Acres Enrolled:

- Texas
- Kansas
- Oklahoma
- Colorado
- Mississippi
- Montana
- North Dakota
- New Mexico
- Arizona
- Kentucky

Grasslands Reserve Program

■ Top 10 States for Rental Agreement Acres Enrolled:

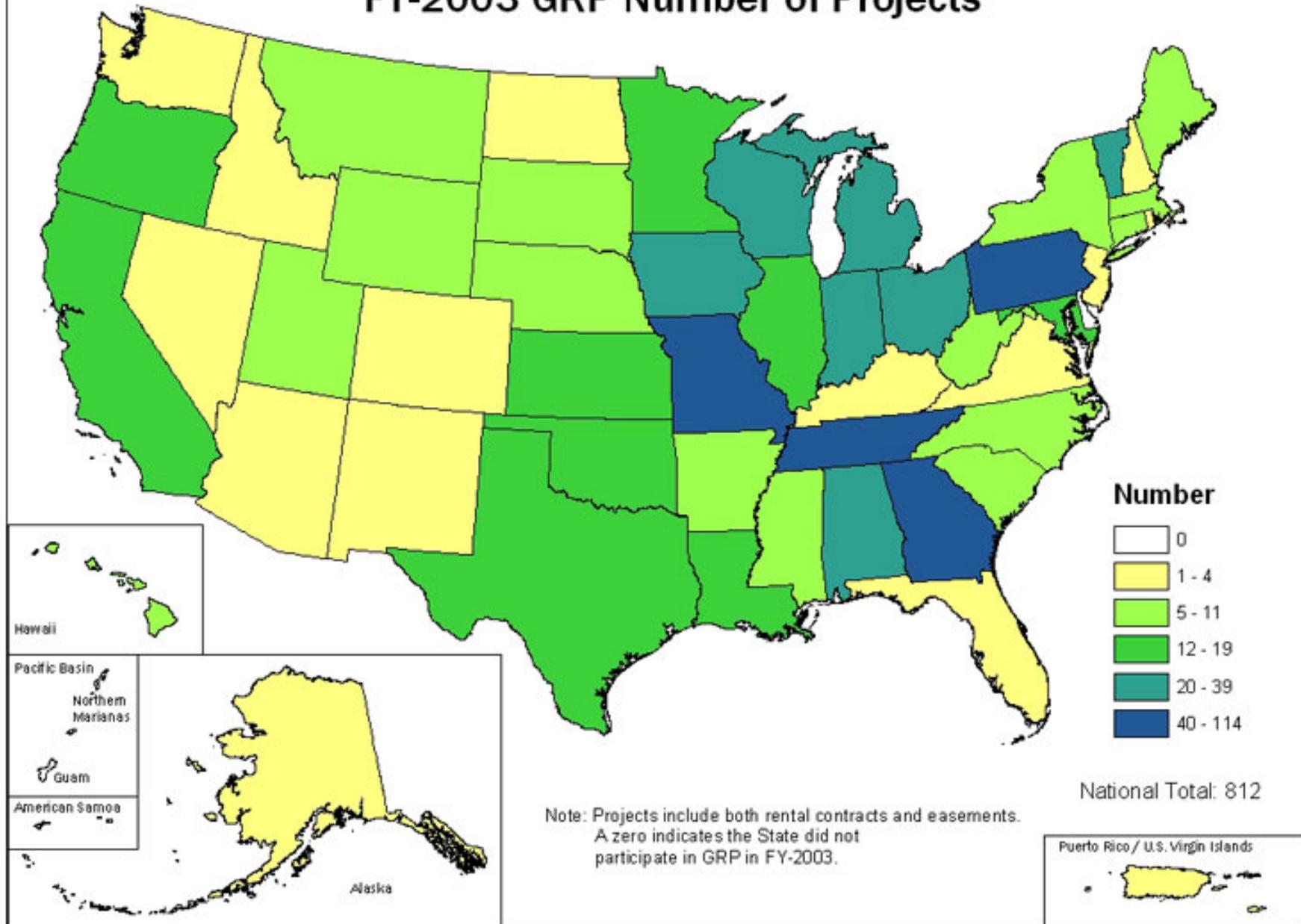
- South Dakota
- California
- Oregon
- Tennessee
- Michigan
- Wyoming
- Missouri
- Oklahoma
- Florida
- Pennsylvania

Grasslands Reserve Program

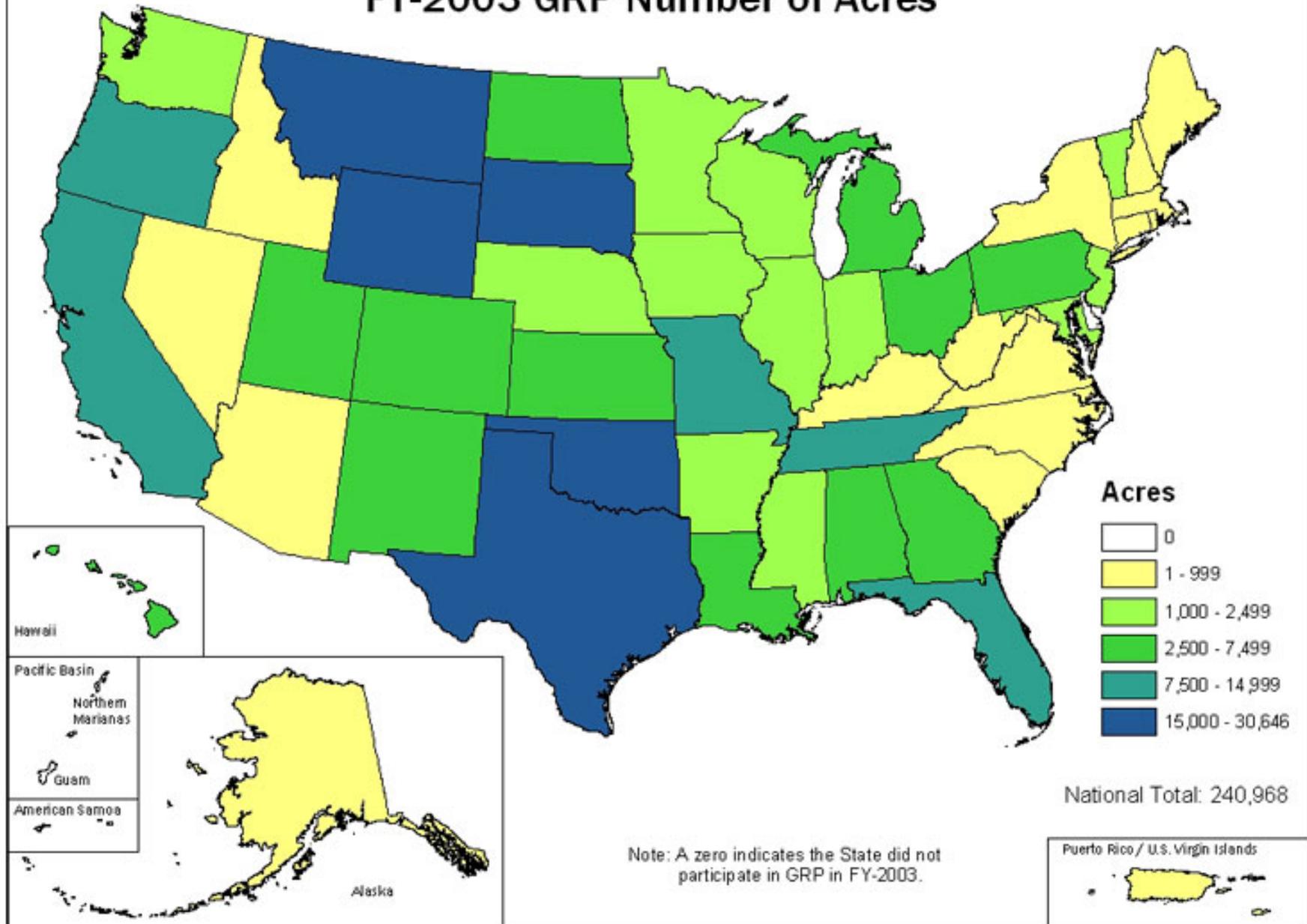
■ Top 10 States for Total Acres Enrolled:

- Texas
- Wyoming
- Montana
- Missouri
- Tennessee
- South Dakota
- Oklahoma
- California
- Oregon
- Florida

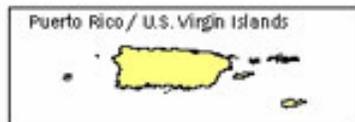
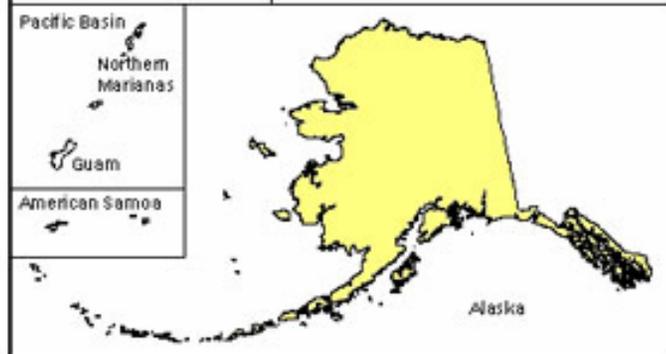
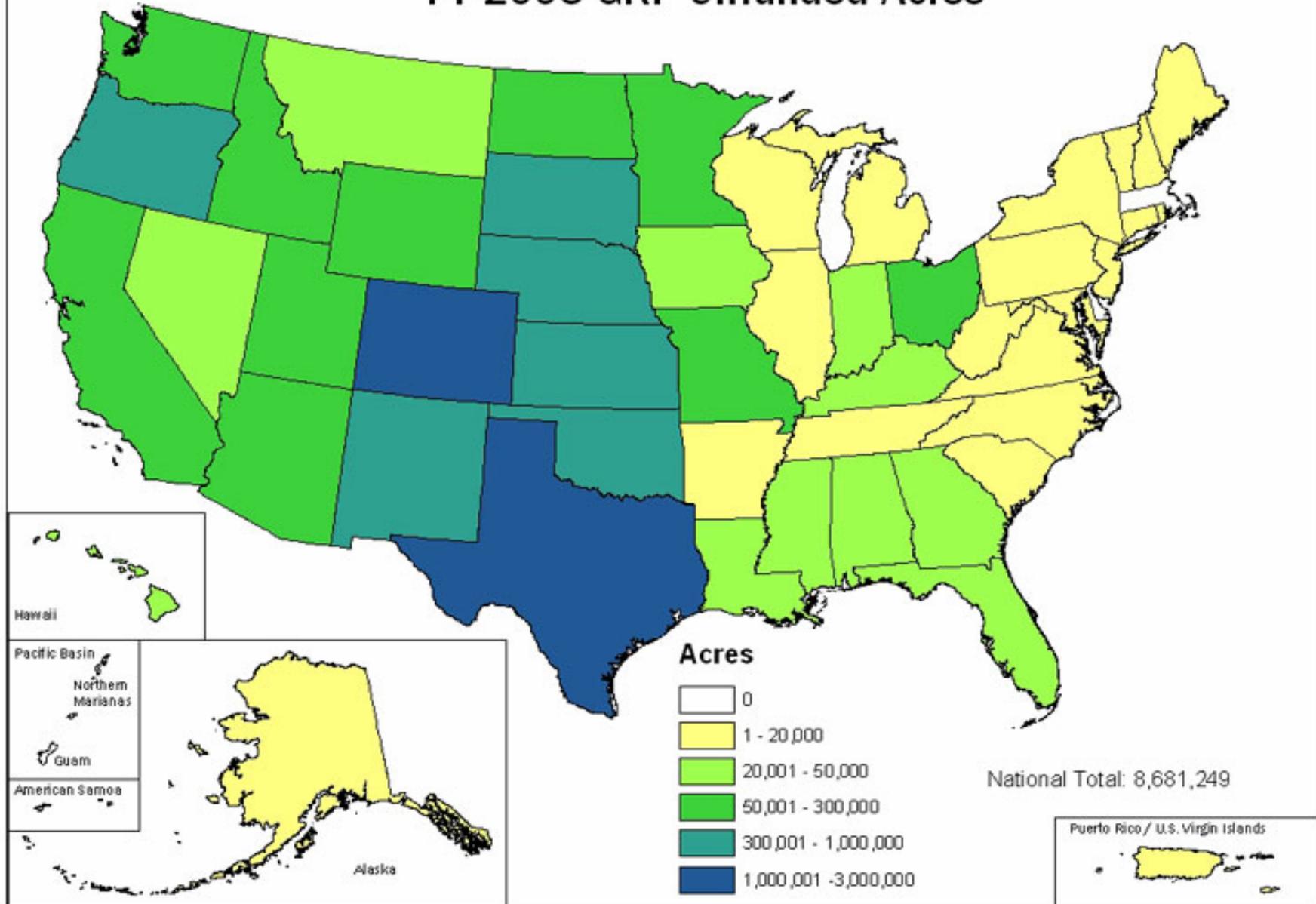
FY-2003 GRP Number of Projects



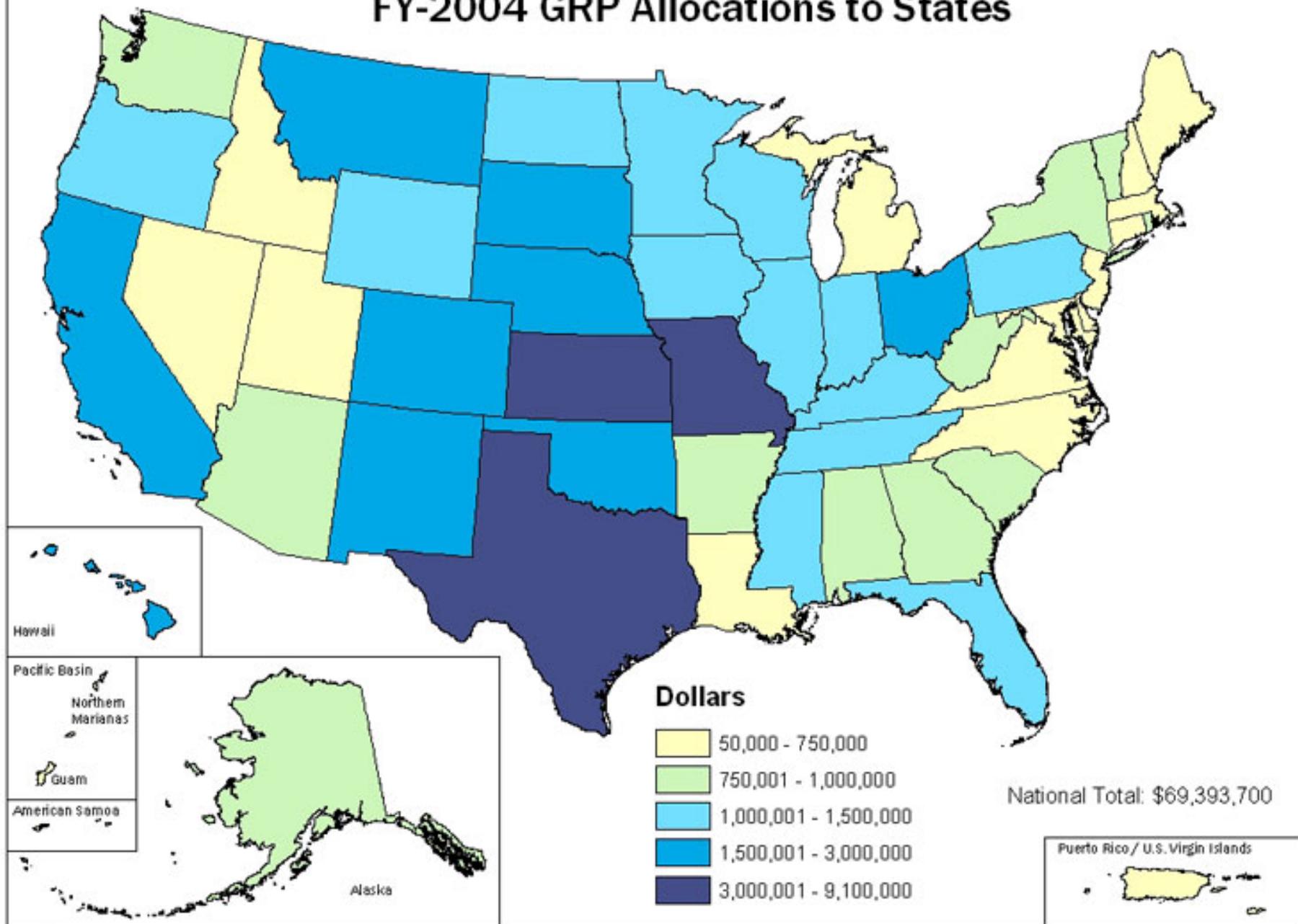
FY-2003 GRP Number of Acres



FY-2003 GRP Unfunded Acres



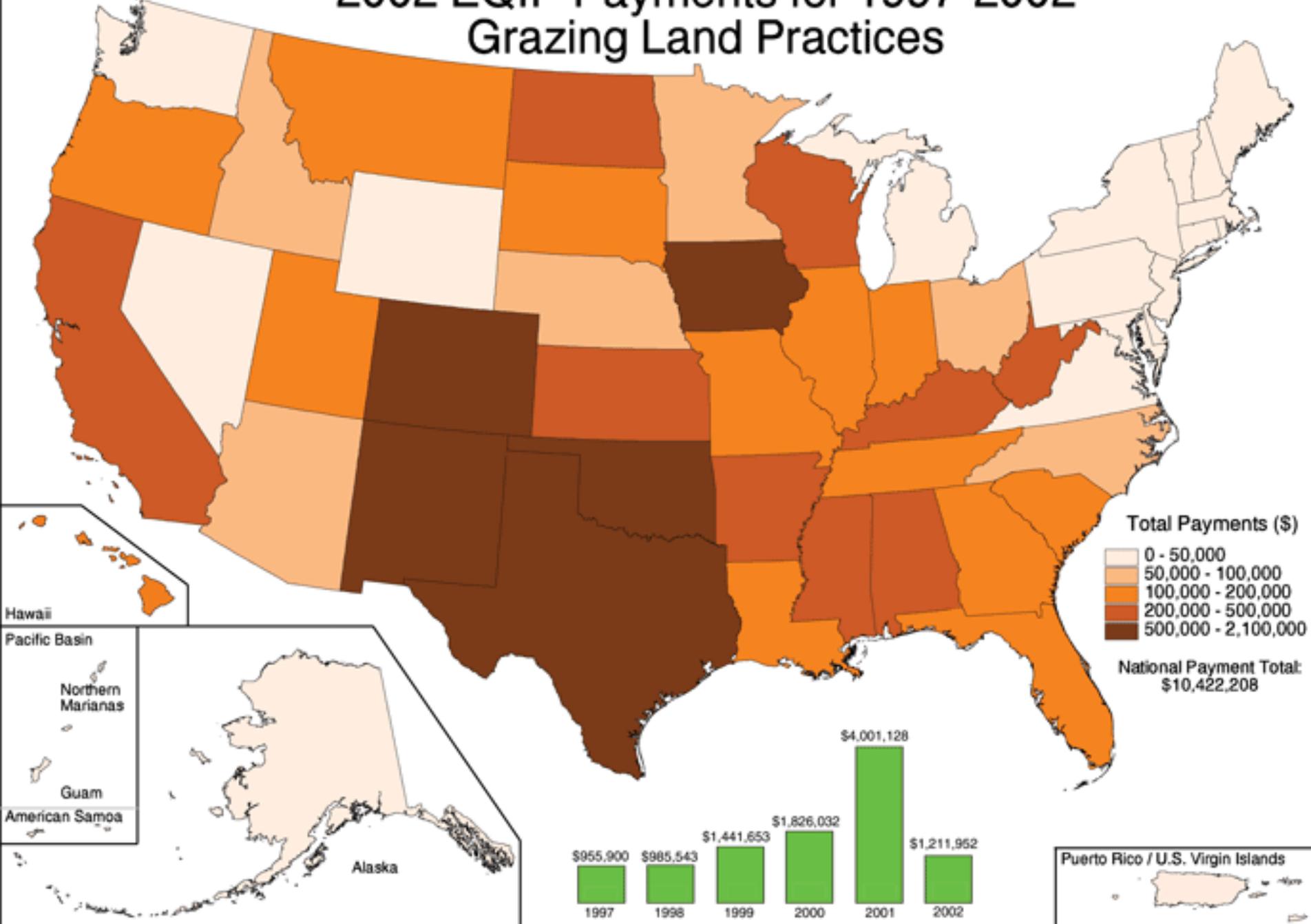
FY-2004 GRP Allocations to States



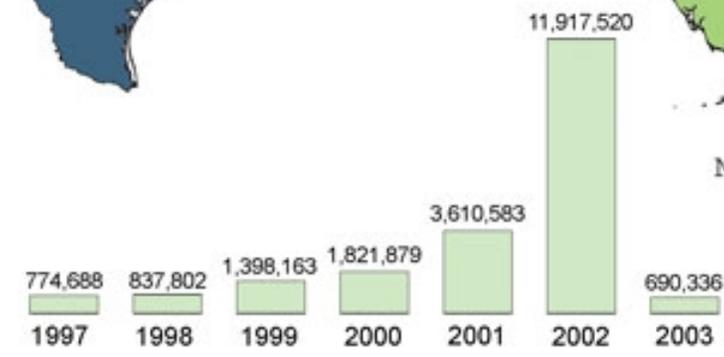
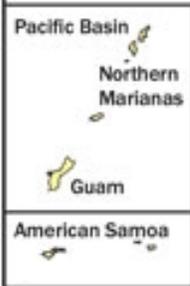
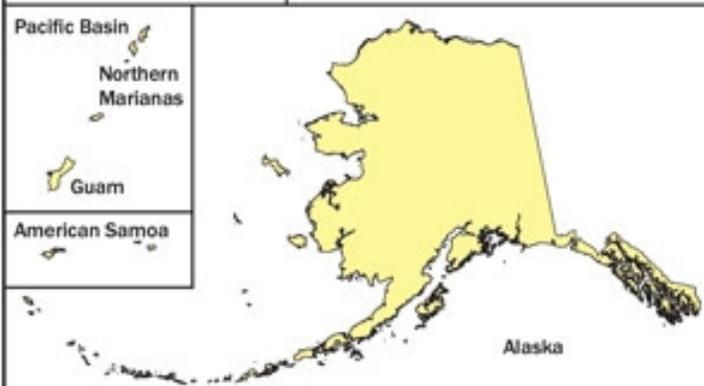
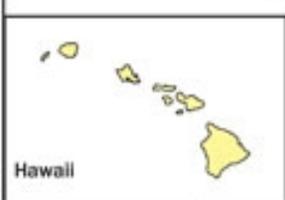
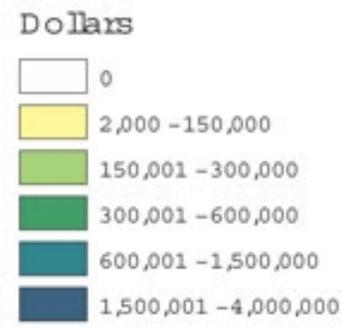
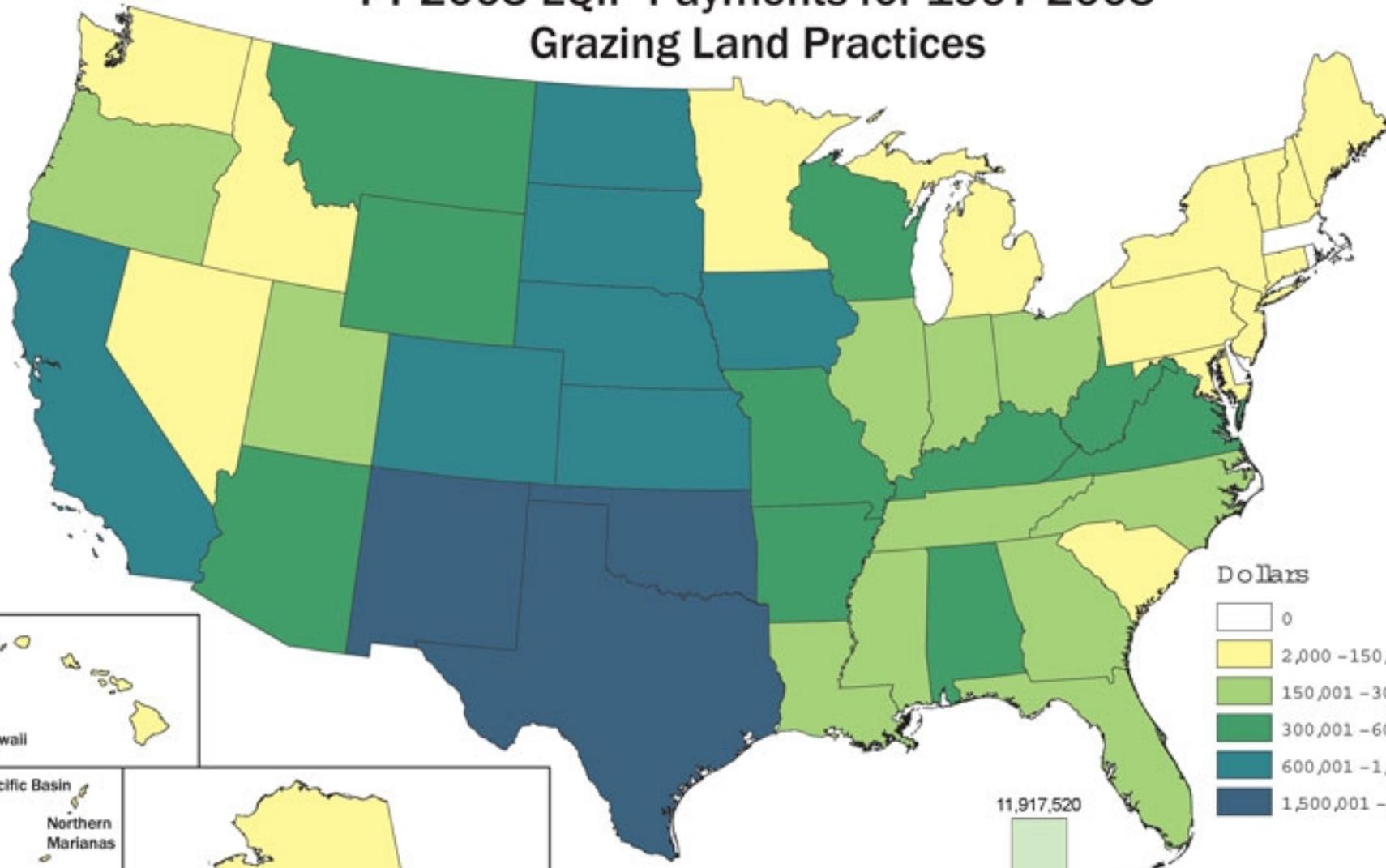
EQIP – Grazing Lands

- **Use of Farm Bill Program Funds on Federal Lands:**
- Controversial Issue - Some conservation district officials will be in support and others in non-support of using more EQIP and other Farm Bill Program funds on federal land for grazing land conservation.
- Some cattle association members are leading a charge to make available more EQIP funds on federal lands within the current EQIP rules.
- The EQIP formula to allocate funds to States includes a factor for federally owned grazing lands.

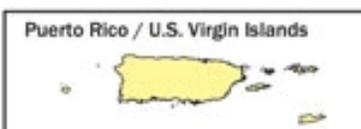
2002 EQIP Payments for 1997-2002 Grazing Land Practices



FY-2003 EQIP Payments for 1997-2003 Grazing Land Practices



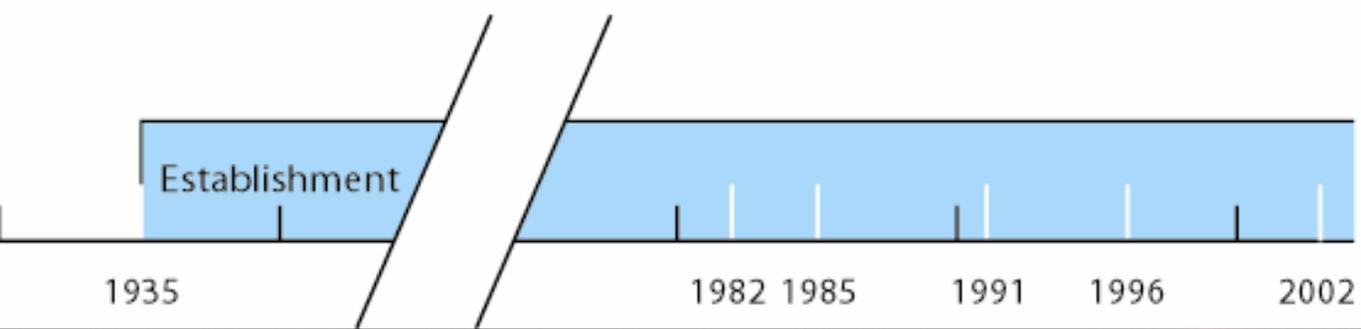
National Total: \$21,050,971



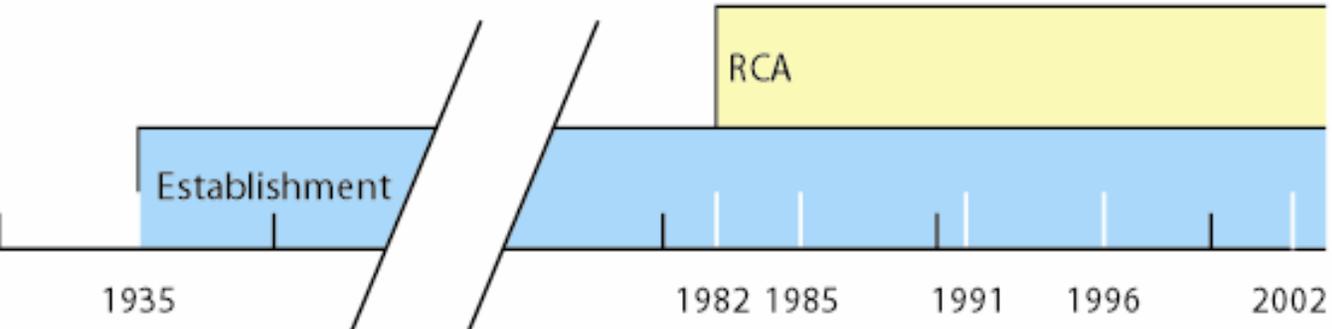
Private Lands Conservation

- GRP and EQIP updates
- Conservation Policy Continuum
- Conservation Security Program
- Management Intensity
- Vision for the Future

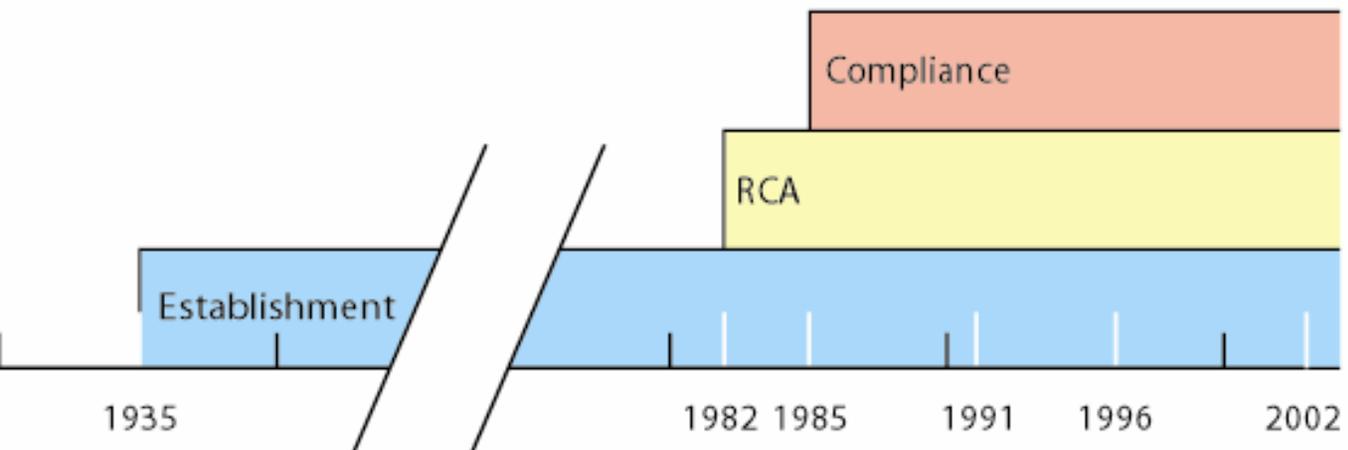
Conservation Policy Continuum



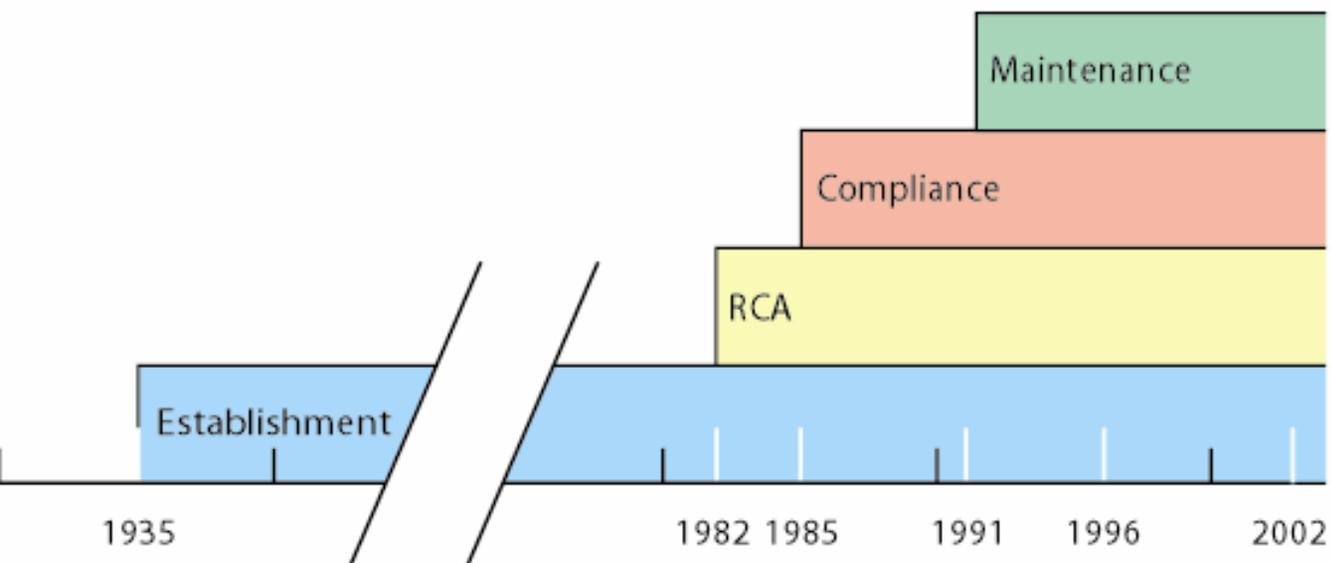
Conservation Policy Continuum



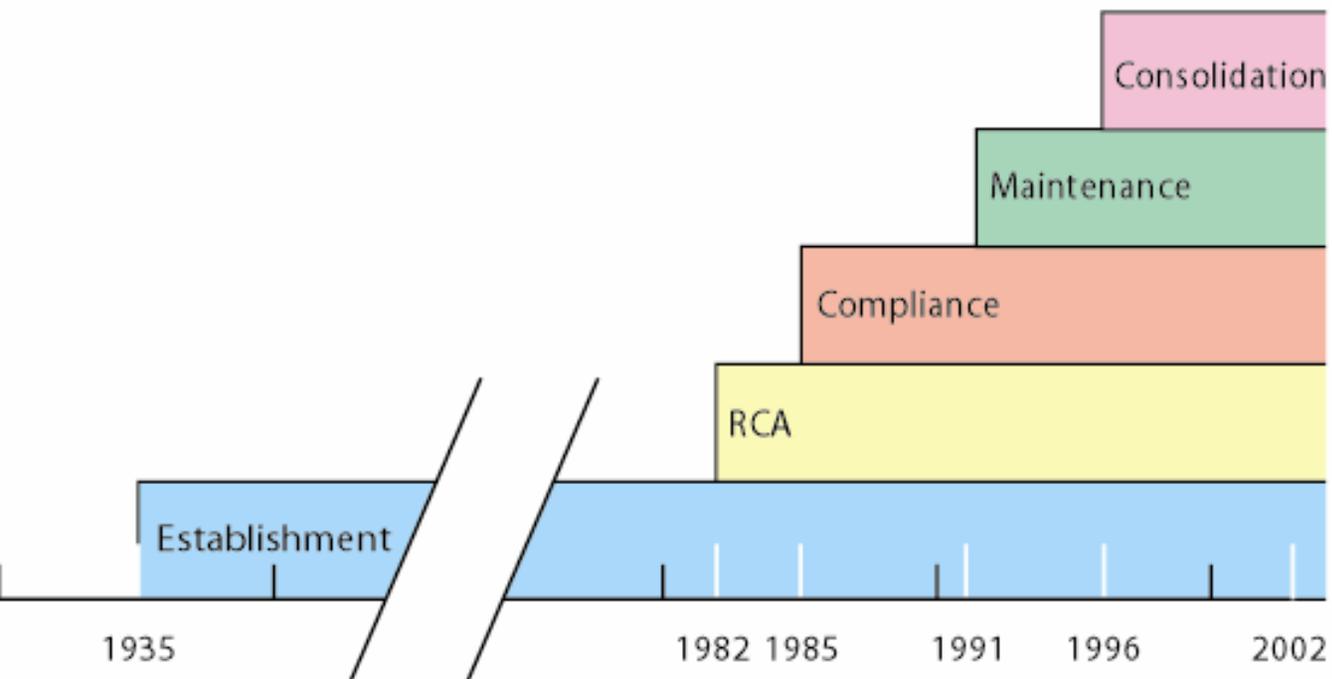
Conservation Policy Continuum



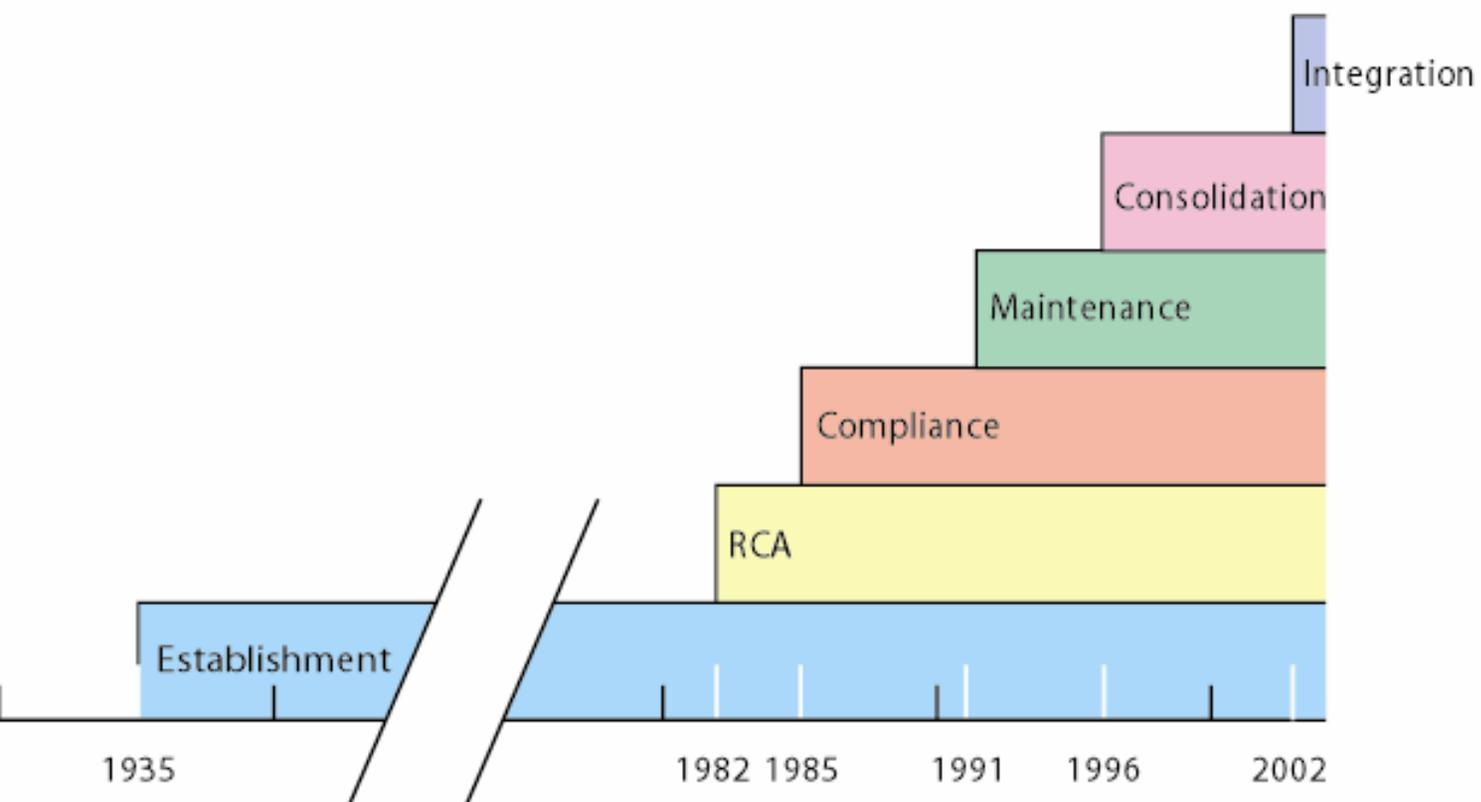
Conservation Policy Continuum



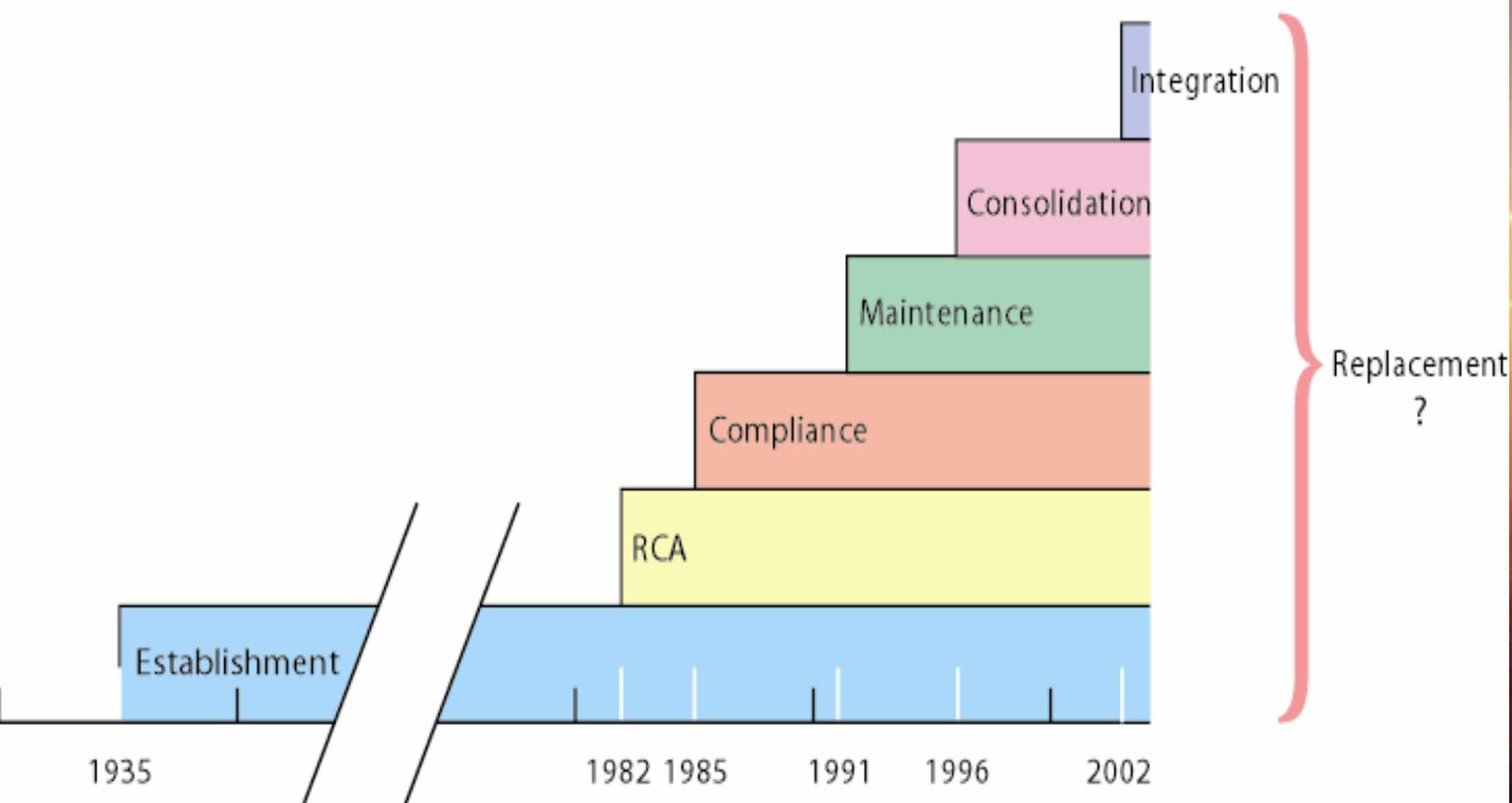
Conservation Policy Continuum



Conservation Policy Continuum



Conservation Policy Continuum



Conservation Security Program

Conservation Security Program (CSP)

- It's a new day in conservation history
- No other program recognizes and rewards farmers for ongoing high levels of environmental stewardship
- CSP helps producers maintain and further their conservation commitment

"CSP will reward the best and motivate the rest."

USDA Secretary Ann M Veneman



- By recognizing producers who are stewardship leaders and who provide the environmental benefits wanted by society, CSP provides strong incentives for others to follow their example.

CSP Will Provide Demonstrable Environmental Benefits



By taking a “snapshot” at the beginning of the contract we obtain a baseline look at the natural resources and the producer’s management of:

- Soil organic matter (carbon)
- Nutrients
- Pesticides
- Other resource concerns

Enhanced Resource Condition

- CSP will improve the condition of America's working farms and ranches and enhance natural resources for the public as a whole



Eligibility Requirements

- Privately-owned or Tribal land
- Applicant in compliance with HEL/wetland provisions
- Active interest in the operation
- Control of land for life of the contract
- Applicant must share in risk and be entitled to a share of the crops or livestock
- Must meet specific minimum requirements

Most Ag Land Eligible

- Producers on cropland, orchards, vineyards, pasture, and range may apply for CSP, regardless of size, type of operation, or crops produced.
- Land in CRP, WRP, GRP, recently converted cropland and forest land are NOT eligible.



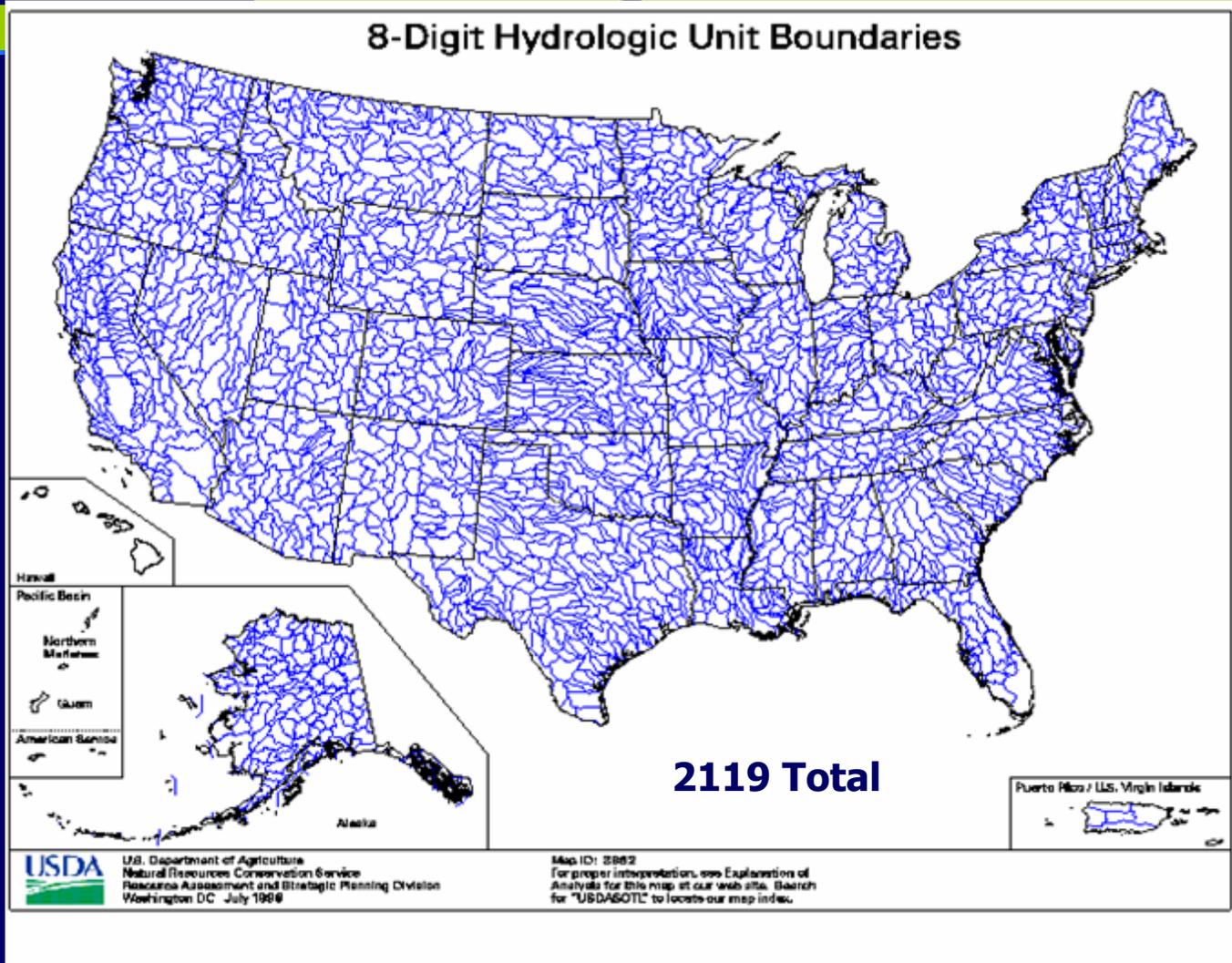
Priority Watersheds:

CSP will first be offered in watersheds with greatest potential for improving:



- Water quality (surface and groundwater)
- Soil quality
- Grazing land condition

NRCS will identify and offer CSP in high priority watersheds according to available funding



Treatment Requirements

- All CSP producers must address minimum treatment criteria for soil quality and water quality
- Techniques to achieve these soil and water criteria will vary depending on your farm's slope, climate and other characteristics
- Might include managing nutrients and pesticides, erosion control and buffers

Three Tiers*

Tier I

have addressed water quality and soil quality on part of the operation

Tier II

have addressed water quality and soil quality on the entire operation; agree to address one other resource concern

Tier III

have addressed all resources on the entire operation and agree to additional activities

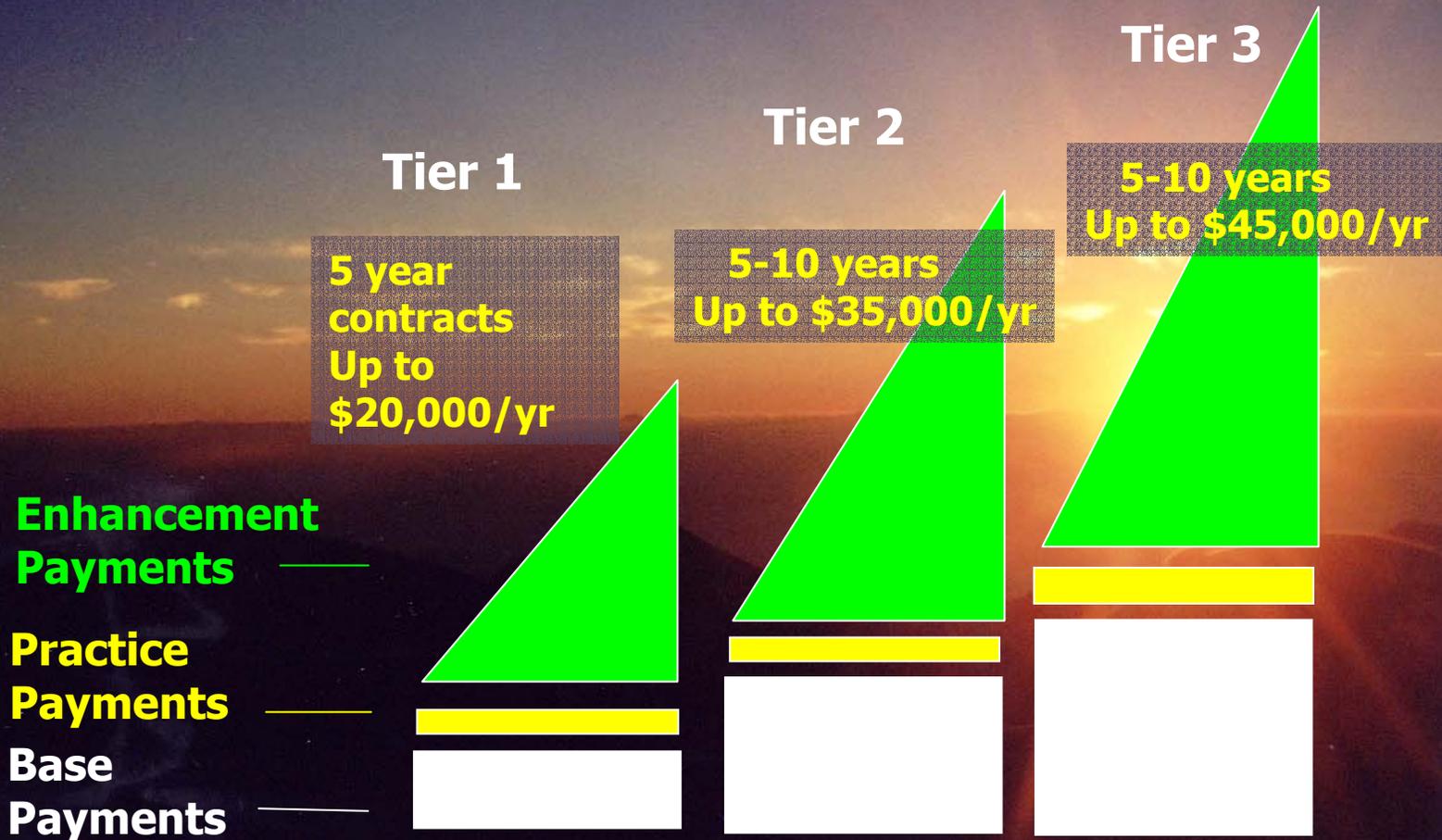
***all participants agree to address any additional sign-up announcement requirements**

Four Payment Components

- 1) An annual base component for the benchmark (existing) conservation treatment
- 2) An annual component for maintaining existing conservation practices
- 3) A one-time new practice component for additional practices
- 4) An enhancement component for exceptional conservation effort



All Payment Components Apply to all 3 Tiers



Enhancement Component

- Payments for producers who add resource benefits beyond the prescribed level
- Types of enhancements include:
 - 1) improving a significant resource concern beyond requirement,
 - 2) improving a priority local resource condition,
 - 3) on-farm demonstrations/pilots,
 - 5) assessment and evaluation activities



Private Lands Conservation

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What is Management Intensity?

- Keep in mind that Intensive Management is referring to a level of treatment and management that is above and beyond the minimum requirements for that practice or management activity
- Some types of intensive management may not be typical NRCS conservation practices at all, such as monitoring and evaluation or on-farm research and demonstration

Practices with Intensive Management

- Intensive Management activities identified for 16 NRCS conservation practices –
 - Residue Management
 - Irrigation Water Management
 - Nutrient Management
 - Pest Management
 - Air Quality
 - Salinity and Sodic Soil Management

Practices with Intensive Management (cont.)

- Atmospheric and Resource Quality Management
- Waste Utilization
- Upland Wildlife Habitat Management
- Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management
- Drainage Water Management
- Conservation Crop Rotation

Practices with Intensive Management (cont.)

- Prescribed Grazing
- Forage Harvest
- Stream Habitat Improvement
- Agroforestry Practices



Management Intensities can be developed for many resources

- Soil Quality
- Wildlife Habitat
- Water Quality and Nutrient Management
- Energy

And Include:

Residue Management

- Meets regionally applicable criteria for National Standard 329.
- Soil Conditioning Index (SCI) value is positive (0.0 +). *Current*
- Soil Tillage Intensity Rating (STIR) is less than 30. *Proposed*
- Not in a monoculture cropping system.

Sod Rotations



- Reduced soil disturbance
- Reduced erosion
- Reduced fertilizer, herbicide, and pesticide inputs
- Reduced fuel usage
- Increased organic matter

CROP ROTATION INTENSITY



UNR cotton

winter legume

wheat

corn

crotonaria



Establish habitat linkages and corridors



Linkages between habitat patches



Potential Enhancement Activities:

- In excess of minimum requirements for the standard:
To manage for forbs and legumes that benefit native pollinators and other wildlife and provide insect food sources for grassland nesting birds.



Potential Enhancement Activities (cont.):

- In excess of minimum requirements for the supply
 - Alternative water supply



Potential Enhancement Activities (cont.):

- In excess of minimum requirements for the standard:
 - Minimize adverse wildlife impacts associated with livestock watering structures (e.g., bat mortality).

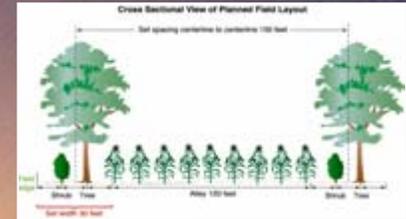


- **N-Testing.** Soil and plant tissue nitrogen tests used to estimate the residual nitrogen available for plant use in determining fertilizer needs
- **Split Nitrogen Applications.** The application of half or less of the required amount of nitrogen for crop production at or before planting, with the remainder applied after emergence
- **Nitrogen inhibitors** can also be used to release nitrates later in the growing season meet plant nutrient needs



... Buffers for Water Quality

- **Widen, lengthen, connect.** Use existing buffers and modify to enhance water quality and other benefits
- **Intersperse and install.** Consider adding woody and herbaceous buffers at critical locations
- **What kinds of buffers work?**



A farm view ... before

Ponds act as grade stabilization structures and stop classic gully erosion. However, ponds overflow during high rainfall events.

Windbreaks control some of the troublesome winds and snow from northwest but cause snow deposition on county road.

Terraces and residue management reduce soil loss to T.

Pond spill over is keeping ephemeral gullies active. The grassed waterway has become too narrow from tillage operations.

Identified pollutants leaving the watershed are pesticides, nutrients, pathogens, and sediment (re. "303d").

Field edges are very narrow or absent. They consist mainly of weedy herbaceous and woody introduced species.

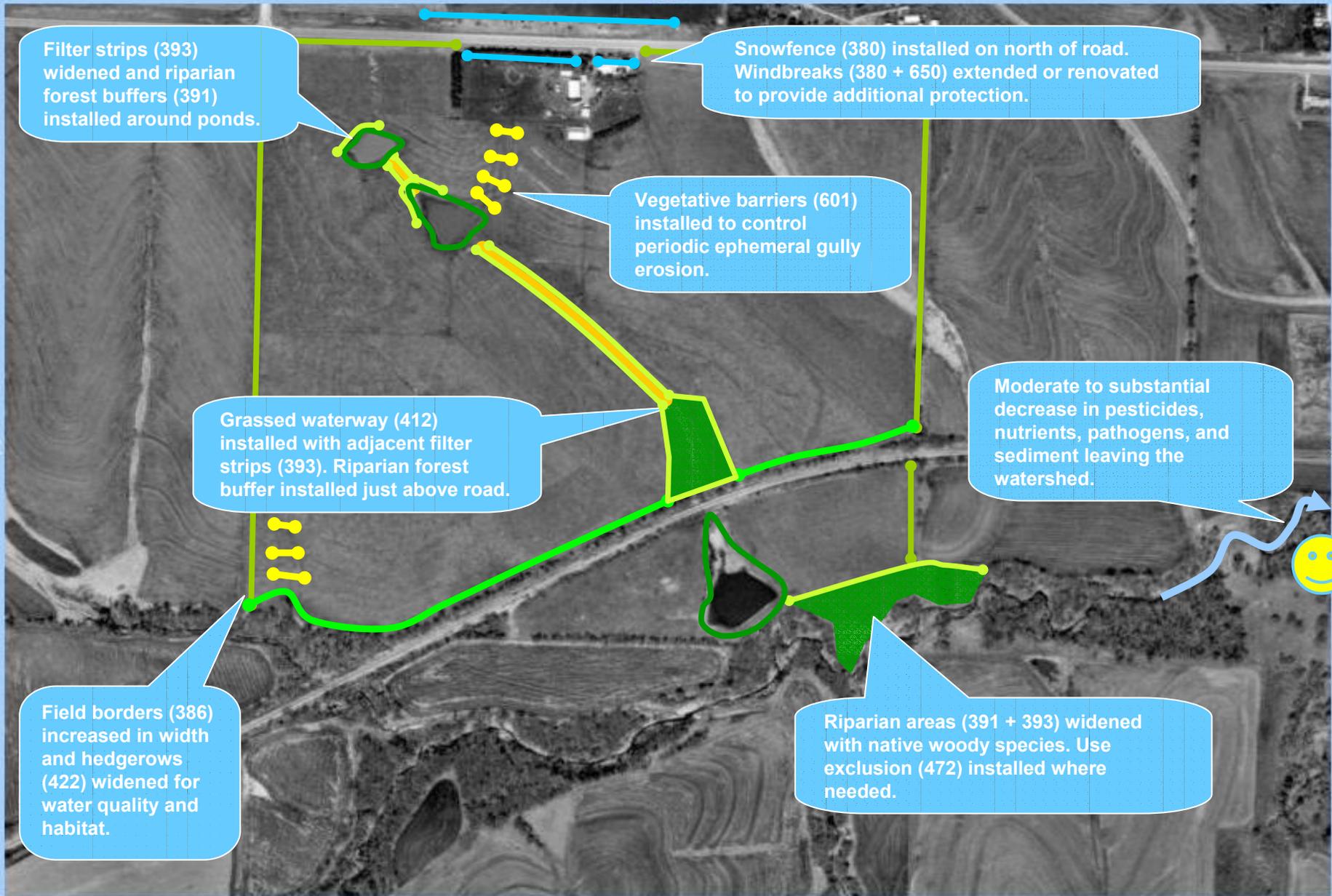
Riparian areas consist of only herbaceous and non-native woody species. Potential is riparian forest.

0 200M

0 200yd



A farm view ... after



Filter strips (393) widened and riparian forest buffers (391) installed around ponds.

Snowfence (380) installed on north of road. Windbreaks (380 + 650) extended or renovated to provide additional protection.

Vegetative barriers (601) installed to control periodic ephemeral gully erosion.

Grassed waterway (412) installed with adjacent filter strips (393). Riparian forest buffer installed just above road.

Moderate to substantial decrease in pesticides, nutrients, pathogens, and sediment leaving the watershed.

Field borders (386) increased in width and hedgerows (422) widened for water quality and habitat.

Riparian areas (391 + 393) widened with native woody species. Use exclusion (472) installed where needed.



Practices installed to address other resource issues can also enhance wildlife habitat

- grassed waterways designed to provide nesting habitat
- field borders widened and managed to provide a transition zone between the agricultural field and adjacent habitat
- riparian areas planted and managed to connect upland habitat with wetland habitat

Fossil Fuel Reductions

- Conversion to no-till may result in approximately 200 million dollars savings annually
- Reduction in commercial fertilizer production and application
- Bio-fuel production

Greenhouse Gas Reduction

- Proper utilization of fertilizer and manure
- Increased carbon sequestration
- Reduced emissions from farm equipment and machinery

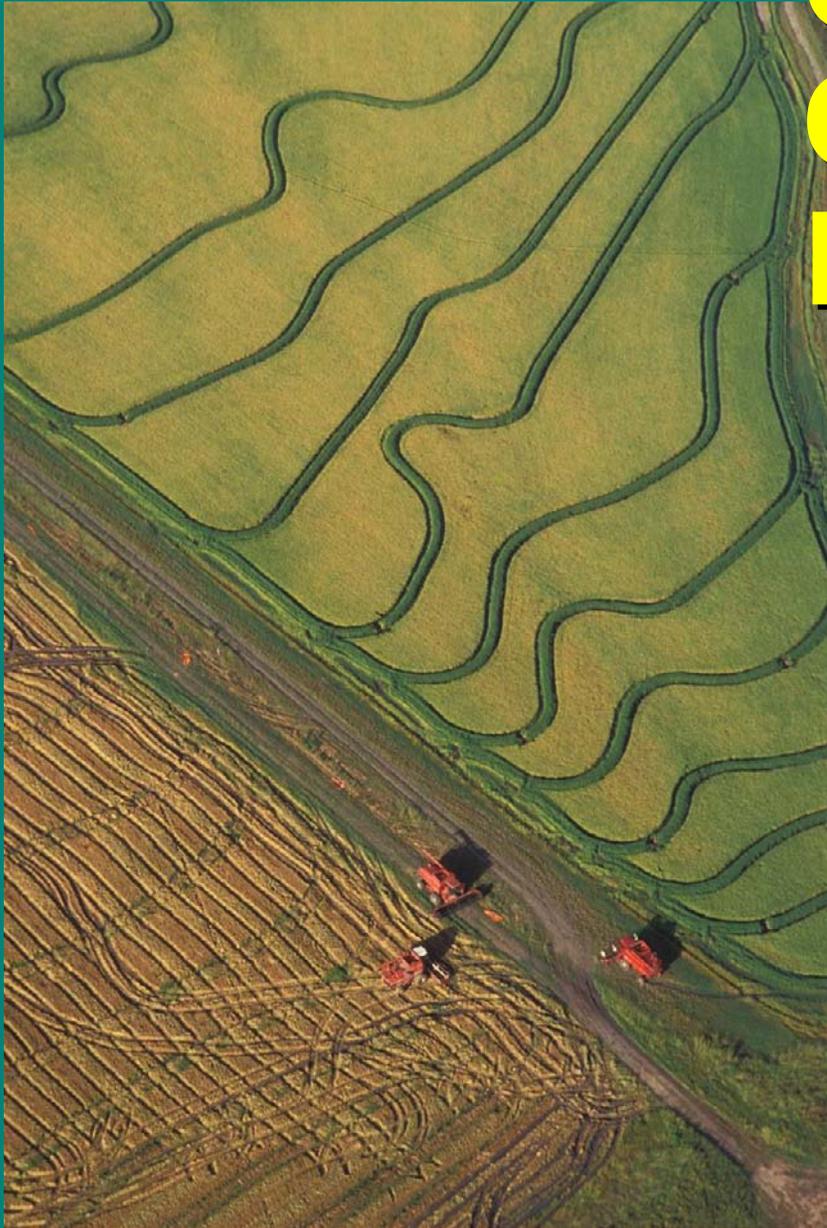
Vision for the Future

- Pull Strategy
- Impacts on Conservation Planning
- Creating Positive Rewards for Compliance
- Beyond Financial Recognition
- Technical Assistance – Workforce Planning
- Line in the Sand on Environmental Performance
- Realignment of Agency Priorities (Dep areas)

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Challenges & Opportunities Remain



- Waterfowl & Wildlife
- Water Quality
- Water Quantity
- Erosion/Soil Quality
- Air Quality

Conclusion

- What can you do?
- What do we have to offer as enhancements using plant materials?
- What specifics can we use for evaluation on range and pasture?