



AQUIFER RECOVERY FUNDING AVAILABLE!

Applications due December 13, 2024

New funding opportunity through the Colorado Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) and their Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) for Aquifer Recovery!

Producers within the project area of the Rio Grande Water Conservation District or the Trinchera Subdistrict that are interested in implementing conservation projects on their private agricultural operation have until **December 13, 2024**, to submit an application to their local NRCS Field Office to be considered for this funding opportunity.

To be eligible for consideration for this funding opportunity, an agricultural producer must have updated farm records with the Farm Service Agency (FSA), must be within the identified project area, and must meet all program eligibility requirements. Interested participants must meet the specific funding pool required criteria to be considered for funding.

The goals of this special funding opportunity are to:

- Assist producers reducing their groundwater consumption
- Assist producers participating in a groundwater conservation easement or other voluntary program
- Assist producers establishing cover crops, establishing permanent vegetation cover, or establishing crops that lower water use consumption
- Assist producer with addressing the following resource concerns: inadequate aquatic habitat, source water depletion, inadequate terrestrial habitat, and weather resilience

If you're interested in seeking financial support for land management conservation, please contact us in advance of the deadline to learn how you can apply. Be sure to sign up early to take part in this limited funding opportunity.

To determine if your project application is eligible for this select fund pool and for additional information about applications **contact Sally Wier**, Colorado Open Lands Conservation Project Manager at 719-480-8471/ swier@coloradoopenlands.org, **or NRCS staff at the Alamosa Office at 719-672-3673.**

Fully completed application packets must be received by the Center, Alamosa, and San Luis Service Centers no later than 4:00 PM MST on Friday, December 13, 2024 to be considered.

Projects to establish permanent vegetative cover or cover crops is a primary focus of this funding source, but other infrastructure projects that support a reduction in groundwater use may also be eligible. Examples are below.

Examples of Eligible Groundwater RCPP Infrastructure Projects

All projects must have a groundwater well involved with the current irrigation system to be eligible for the funding program. All projects must be using existing irrigation systems (i.e. no flood to pivot irrigation conversion projects are eligible).

Example 1

Applicant has a center pivot and the water supply for the center pivot comes directly from a groundwater well somewhere on the field. The applicant also has surface water that is adjudicated for use on the ground under the center pivot but has not been used through the center pivot because the infrastructure needed to do so does not exist. Applicant can apply for funding to install the infrastructure to use the surface water in the pivot instead of groundwater.

Example 2

Applicant has a groundwater well water and surface water that are both currently being used through a center pivot. Surface water is currently diverted directly into a can pump from the supply ditch to the center pivot. Applicant wants a reservoir and the needed infrastructure to allow for better use of the surface water rather than losing most of it down ditch.

Example 3

Applicant currently has a groundwater well that open discharges into an unlined ditch and then to a reservoir or to a can pump at the pivot. Applicant wants to tie the groundwater pump directly to the pivot or reservoir and get rid of the open ditch, thus reducing loss.

Examples of Ineligible Groundwater RCPP Infrastructure Projects

Example 1

Applicant has a groundwater well and surface water for a center pivot. Applicant wants a pipeline to pipe water directly from main ditch to the pivot to avoid ditch losses in the surface water. This is allowed as an application under regular NRCS EQIP but not the groundwater RCPP because the project would actually reduce recharge to the aquifer.

Example 2

Applicant wishes to convert their operation from flood irrigation to center pivot irrigation.