

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Kittatinny Ridge Conservation Landscape Project



What to Know

Project Purpose: *This RCPP project funds entity-held (i.e., partner-held) farmland, forest easement acquisitions, and conservation planning.*

Project Timeframe: 2021-2026

Lead Partner with NRCS: Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture

Project Area: 22 counties in southcentral and eastern Pennsylvania along the Kittatinny Ridge

USDA Funding:

\$7 million for farmland and forest easements (financial assistance)

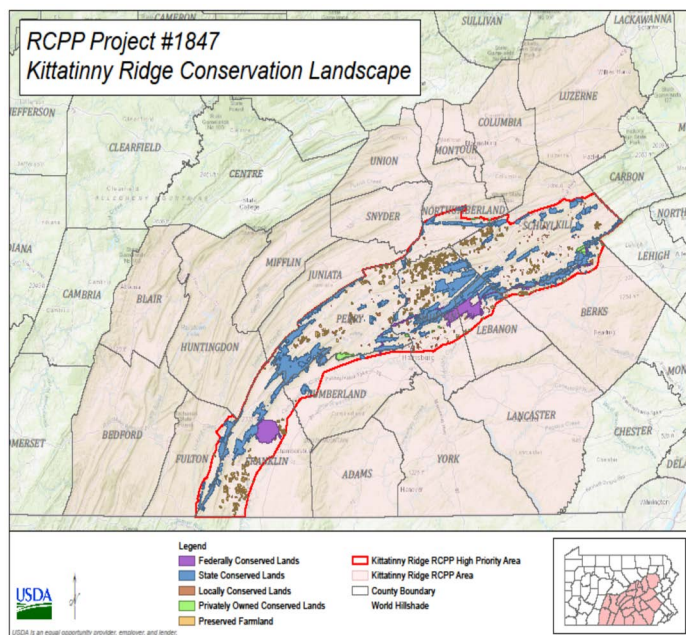
\$1,785,000 for conservation planning (technical assistance)

Partner Contributions:

\$38,553,000 farmland and forest easements (financial assistance)

\$429,500 for conservation planning and general project support (technical assistance)

RCPP Project Map



Background

Pennsylvania is a national leader in farmland preservation with 6,300 farms and 630,000 acres protected through permanent agricultural conservation easements. The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA), as lead partner and in cooperation with a coalition of conservation organizations and government agencies, will leverage federal RCPP funds to match state, county, and local land preservation investments throughout the Kittatinny Ridge Conservation Landscape.

Known as the “Endless Mountain” by the Lenape Native Americans, the Kittatinny Ridge is an incredibly valuable natural resource in Pennsylvania. It stretches 185 miles from the Delaware Water Gap to the Mason-Dixon Line.

The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources has designated the Kittatinny Ridge as one of its eight Conservation Landscapes, which aim to drive strategic investment and actions around sustainability, conservation, community revitalization, and recreational projects. Furthermore, the ridge has been identified by the National Audubon Society as a Globally Important Bird Area and the premier raptor migration corridor in the northeast, and The Nature Conservancy’s Resilient and Connected Landscapes Project highlighted the ridge as “critical resilient land.”

The Landscape is critical for watershed protection for the Susquehanna and Delaware Rivers. Segments of the Appalachian Trail and portions of the Delaware Gap National Recreation Area are within the Kittatinny Landscape.

What is RCPP? The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) is a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) program that follows a partner-driven approach to conservation. RCPP funds solutions to natural resource challenges on agricultural and forest land.

Through RCPP, NRCS cooperates with project partners to implement projects that demonstrate innovative solutions to conservation challenges and provide measurable improvements to resource concerns. RCPP projects are implemented using NRCS contracts and easements with producers and landowners.

Examples of Available Easement Types

Minimally Restrictive: agricultural use

Moderately Restrictive: conservation uses, but with compatible agricultural uses

Highly Restrictive: uses are limited to protection of conservation values

Outcomes as of December 2023

The total conservation of farmland and forest easements across the counties has totaled 1,520 acres and \$1,835,700 of financial assistance obligated.

How to Get Assistance

For questions related to existing RCPP projects offering Agricultural and Forest Easement funding, please contact your County's Agricultural Preservation Board, or contact Stephanie Zimmerman at the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA) by phone at 717-705-7796 or via email at stzimmerman@pa.gov.

For all other questions related to new and existing RCPP projects in Pennsylvania, contact Adam Dellinger, NRCS RCPP Program Manager at 717-237-2206 or adam.dellinger@usda.gov.



Project Partners

