

THE NEBRASKA SOIL CARBON PROJECT

RECRUITMENT AND ENROLLMENT BASIC INFORMATION

Updated August 2023

The Nebraska Soil Carbon Project is a collaboration between:



The **project goal** is to team up with producers to install new soil health practices on central Nebraska cropland.

100,000
TREATED
ACRES

OVER
5 YEARS

FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR ADOPTING:



COVER
CROPS



NO-TILL



CROP ROTATION



- ✓ **Soil health practices** have benefits to both the farmer and for conservation. However, adopting new soil health practices involves many short-term uncertainties for the producer.
- ✓ These practices can enhance a **field's resiliency and productivity**.
- ✓ They also have potential to provide ecosystem benefits like **storing carbon**.
- ✓ **New programs** for soil carbon are being developed but the available information is too scattered and varied.
- ✓ Private companies are looking for ways to support farmers and reach their **sustainability** goals.

- ✓ This project provides **financial incentives** for implementing conservation practices.
- ✓ This project provides **technical assistance** to participants.
- ✓ A **soil carbon pilot project** provides opportunity to better understand how the participating farmers may be able to leverage these programs on their operation.
- ✓ **Water quality** outcomes will be calculated, providing further information about the ecosystem impacts of these practices.

Two components of one same project:

Participants can participate in either or both.

- ✓ **NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program:**
 - ✓ - Funds are available for implementing new soil health practices.
 - Variable payments per acre depending on the chosen practice(s).
 - Program is similar to EQIP program.
 - Multiple practices can be stacked in the same field.
- ✓ **Environmental Services Market Consortium (ESMC):**
 - Non-profit organization developing a carbon platform focused on farmers needs.
 - Project is paying for participation, not performance.
 - Annual agreement with ESMC to participate.

VALUE TO FARMERS



Financial assistance.

NRCS payments vary depending upon type of soil health practice.

Practices include reduced tillage, diversified rotations, and cover crops, according to NRCS practice codes.

Additional incentives for participation in ESMC pilot project and other project research opportunities



Technical assistance.

Assistance from NRD, NRCS, and TNC staff to support paperwork/application process and soil health practice management.



Opportunity to attend project training events.

With local and national leaders in soil health, agronomy, and other relevant topics.



Opportunity to share conservation stories with a larger audience.

Producers can take part in or lead field days, media spots, short project videos, etc.



Connection with emerging carbon programs.

Payments to producer will not be linked to carbon storage, but will instead be paid by acres of practice adopted. ESMC will quantify carbon and water quality outcomes.



Report on the impact of new soil health practices.

Producers enrolled in the ESMC pilot project will receive a report on the new practice's soil carbon and water quality outcomes. If they opt in to providing additional economic data, producers can also receive a detailed report on the practice's financial return on investment.



KEY CONSIDERATIONS

ENROLLMENT IN THE NRCS RCPP PAYMENT PROGRAM AND/OR THE ESMC PILOT

Producers will be **encouraged to enroll in both** the **NRCS RCPP** and the **ESMC Pilot** programs, but will have the option of just enrolling in one of these components and not the other. The ESMC Pilot will quantify project outcomes, including carbon benefits. **To receive soil sampling, farmers must be enrolled in the ESMC Pilot.**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT THAT NRCS CRITERIA WILL BE USED TO RANK APPLICATIONS

Not all applications will be approved through the NRCS ranking process, but producers can apply multiple times over the project's life. Additionally, a producer could still enroll in the ESMC portion of the project without being approved by NRCS. Unlike other NRCS programs, there is **no gross income or acre enrollment cap** for NRCS payments in this project.

PROVIDE AGRONOMIC AND SOIL DATA TO PROJECT COORDINATORS

This information will be collected through the ESMC pilot project if the farmer decided to enroll in this component of the project.

THE PRODUCER MUST FARM IN THE **UPPER BIG BLUE** AND/OR **CENTRAL PLATTE** NRDs REGION

The NRCS funds for this project are dedicated to just this region. However, if a farmer outside of this geography wants to be involved in other aspects of the project, like the ESMC portion and training sessions, they are encouraged to reach out to a project coordinator.

PAYMENTS ARE FOR NEW SOIL HEALTH ACRES ONLY

But a **measurable improvement of an existing practice could count**, as long as it aligns with NRCS standards. **Multiple soil health practices can also be stacked** on the same fields.

HOW TO BECOME INVOLVED



Regional Conservation Partnership Program

FIRST STEP IS TO CONTACT YOUR LOCAL NRCS REPRESENTATIVE

Local NRCS staff will be able to explain the RCPP program and provide guidance through the application process.

Applications can be submitted at any time during the year.

For an application *to be ranked and considered for the next round of funding (Practices in 2024)*, it must be submitted by:

FALL 2023



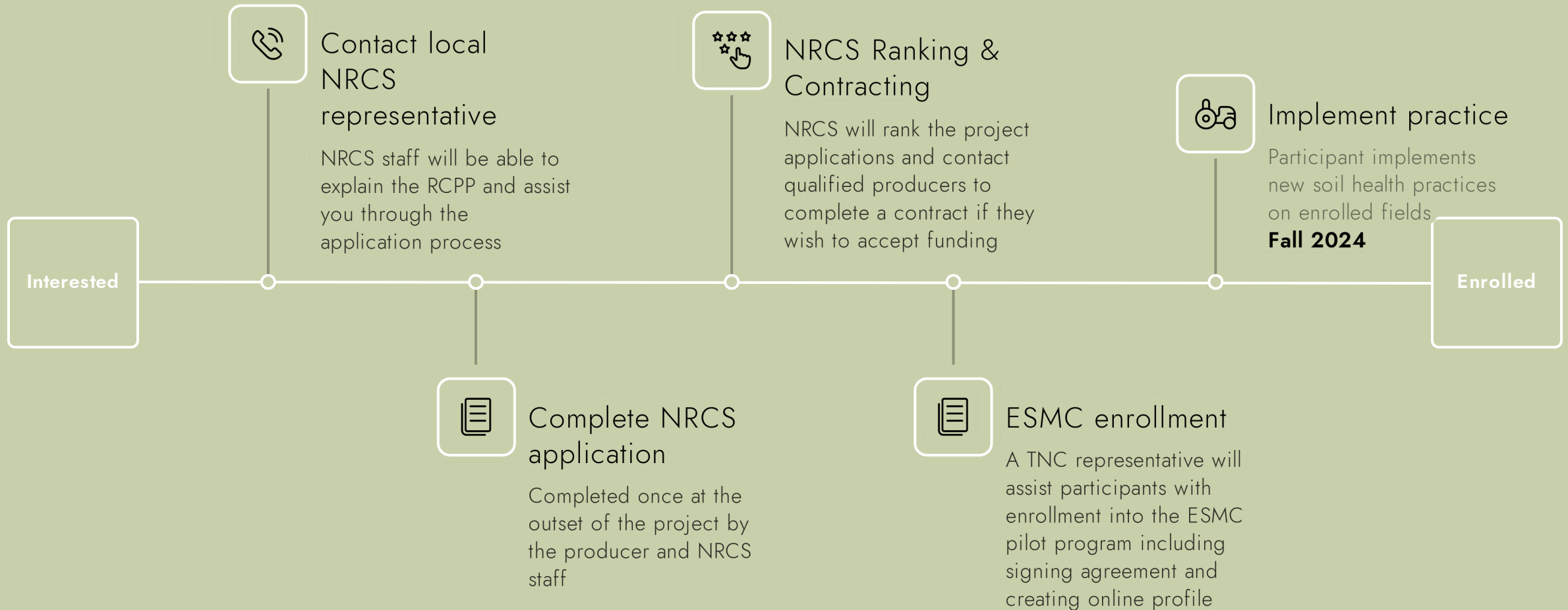
SOIL CARBON PILOT PROJECT

**CONTACT REPRESENTATIVE AT
THE NATURE CONSERVANCY**

Nick Arneson - nicholas.arneson@tnc.org - 402-676-1618

Jacob Fritton - jfritton@tnc.org - 308-529-2636

WHAT ARE THE FARMER'S ACTIONS?



KEY CONTACTS - PROJECT REPRESENTATIVES

Any of the below contacts are available to answer questions and assist farmers interested in enrolling in the project.



Courtney Widup

Central Platte NRD

Project representative
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Marie Krausnick

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PROJECT AREA AND NRCS CONTACT INFORMATION

The location where you work with FSA would be the best choice for your initial contact.

