

**Natural Resources Conservation Service
Report To
Papio-Missouri River NRD Board
June 13, 2019
Neil Jensen, District Conservationist**



Pilot Project Will Assist Nebraska Farmers in Addressing Ephemeral Gullies on Highly Erodible Land

Nebraska is one of five states selected by the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to take part in a pilot project that will provide financial assistance to farmers to address ephemeral gullies on highly erodible land.

The application deadline is July 19, 2019, for the \$2 million available in Nebraska through the pilot project. Priority will be given to applicants with tracts that were selected for conservation compliance reviews in the past two years and received variances to address ephemeral gully erosion.

Since the passage of the 1985 Farm Bill, farmers have been required to control erosion on fields that are classified as highly erodible. Each spring, NRCS conducts compliance reviews on a random selection of highly erodible fields to determine if erosion has been adequately controlled. A non-compliance ruling can affect benefits that farmers receive from USDA agencies, including Conservation Reserve Program payments and Price Loss Coverage. If erosion control issues are identified during compliance reviews, farmers may be given variances, which provide time for farmers to make adjustments and install needed conservation practices.

Ephemeral gullies are those areas in cropland fields where small gullies appear after heavy rains. Fixing the gullies with conservation practices protects productivity and water quality and allows farmers with highly erodible land to continue receiving USDA benefits.

The pilot project will provide cost-share funding to farmers to implement conservation practices such as cover crops, crop rotation, no-till, contour farming, buffer strips, terraces, waterways and others.

Our advice to a farmer with an ephemeral gully is to 'fix it, don't disc it.' Work with your local NRCS staff to develop conservation alternatives that will address your erosion issue. As a natural resources agency we are dedicated to working with farmers and ranchers to figure out ways for them to produce agricultural products in ways that are both economical to them while protecting the resources. This pilot provides us with additional funding to do that.

Other states involved in the pilot project are Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, and Missouri. For more information or to apply for assistance contact the NRCS office serving your county.



Fix it, Don't Disc it

Stop Ephemeral Gully Erosion with Conservation Systems



Got a Gully?

Runoff water flowing from uneven landscapes tends to concentrate in natural, depressional channels. These channels, called ephemeral gullies, can be reshaped and farmed across, but continued, concentrated flow takes away the soil. Ephemeral gullies sometimes are described as silent erosion because they can be easily smoothed over, hidden and planted to crops. Discing an ephemeral gully leaves nutrient-rich topsoil vulnerable to erosion. Fixing ephemeral gullies through conservation practices protects productivity and water quality and allows farmers with highly erodible land to continue receiving USDA farm program benefits.



Ephemeral Gully

Fix it, Don't Disc It.

Below are examples of just a few of the natural resources conservation practices and management options available to help farmers voluntarily fix ephemeral gullies in their fields. Additional practices to consider include: conservation crop rotation, contour buffer strips, contour farming, stripcropping, critical area planting, and water and sediment control basin. Contact your local NRCS office for help deciding which options are best for you and your farm, and to learn about financial assistance options.



No Till



Cover Crops



Grassed Waterway



Terraces

Conservation Compliance

The 1985 Farm Bill required Conservation Compliance for all USDA program participants if they farm highly erodible land (HEL). ANY tillage not accounted for in your conservation plan may put you out of compliance.

Should you be concerned? If you have highly erodible land, and you have small gullies forming in your fields you should check with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Discing or smoothing the gullies will not fix the problem. And you risk losing your USDA farm program benefits.

When in doubt, visit your local NRCS office before performing any tillage that is not part of your conservation plan on HEL land.



More Information

For more information visit your local USDA Service Center or the NRCS Nebraska website at www.nrcs.usda.gov.

Find your local NRCS office

<http://offices.usda.gov>

Helping People Help the Land



Second Application Cut-off Deadline for Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Wildlife Initiative in Nebraska

With the enactment of the 2018 Farm Bill, funds dedicated to wildlife habitat development through EQIP increased from a minimum of 5% to a minimum of 10% of the total EQIP funds. To facilitate the increase in funds devoted to wildlife habitat development, Nebraska NRCS is offering a second application and ranking cut-off deadline for EQIP Wildlife Initiative Nebraska (WIN) applications.

The second application cut-off date for EQIP WIN applications is July 5, 2019.



More EQIP Funding Becomes Available

NRCS within the PM-R NRD has received enough funding to obligate the remaining eligible applications within the local fund codes for cropland and grassland.

NRCS has already obligated 18 contracts totaling \$321,947.00. Another 38 applications have been pre-approved. Funding will exceed 1 million if all applicants proceed with their projects.

Practices being funded by EQIP include:

- Terrace Systems
- Grassed Waterways
- Grade Stabilization Structures
- Animal Feeding Operation (AFO)
- Emergency Animal Mortality Management
- Cover Crops
- Nutrient Management
- Pasture Improvements
- Brush Management
- Seasonal High Tunnels
- Wildlife Habitat

CONSERVATION

Our Purpose.
Our Passion.

Helping People Help the Land.

Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.