

**Natural Resources Conservation Service
Report To
Papio-Missouri River NRD Board
November 12, 2015
Neil Jensen, District Conservationist**

Supporting Our Veteran Farmers



Veterans of the U.S. Armed Services receive preference for NRCS conservation programs offered in the 2014 Farm Bill. These voluntary conservation programs benefit both agricultural producers and the environment, and include financial and technical assistance as well as easements.

Benefits - Preference will be given to eligible Veteran Farmers or Ranchers applying for several types of conservation financial assistance through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP).

Eligibility - An eligible Veteran Farmer or Rancher:

- meets the definition of a Beginning Farmer or Rancher
- has not operated a farm or ranch; or hasn't operated a farm or ranch for more than 10 consecutive years
- was discharged or released, under conditions other than dishonorable, from the United States Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, its reserve components and the National Guard

For a legal entity or joint operation to be considered a Veteran Farmer or Rancher entity, all members must meet the above definition. Veteran Farmers or Ranchers may also qualify as a Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher by meeting additional criteria.

How to Apply - To learn how to get started with NRCS, visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/getstarted.

USDA MAKES COMMITMENTS TO HELP BUILD UP NEXT GENERATION OF FARMERS AND RANCHERS

USDA United States Department of Agriculture
New Farmers

About USDA | Glossary | Ask the Expert | Languages | Contact Us

Start FARMING

NEW FARMERS | WOMEN IN AG | YOUNG FARMERS | VETERANS | FARMS IN TRANSITION | DISCOVERY TOOL

New Farmers

Discover it here.

Agriculture is full of exciting and rewarding opportunities. Farming is a tough job, but at the heart of it all, you'll see a vibrant community contributing to the future of our nation's health and food security.

Find the resources you need to get started or personalize your search with our [Discovery Tool](#).

New Farmers
Access the support and resources you need to begin farming or use our easy [Discovery Tool](#).

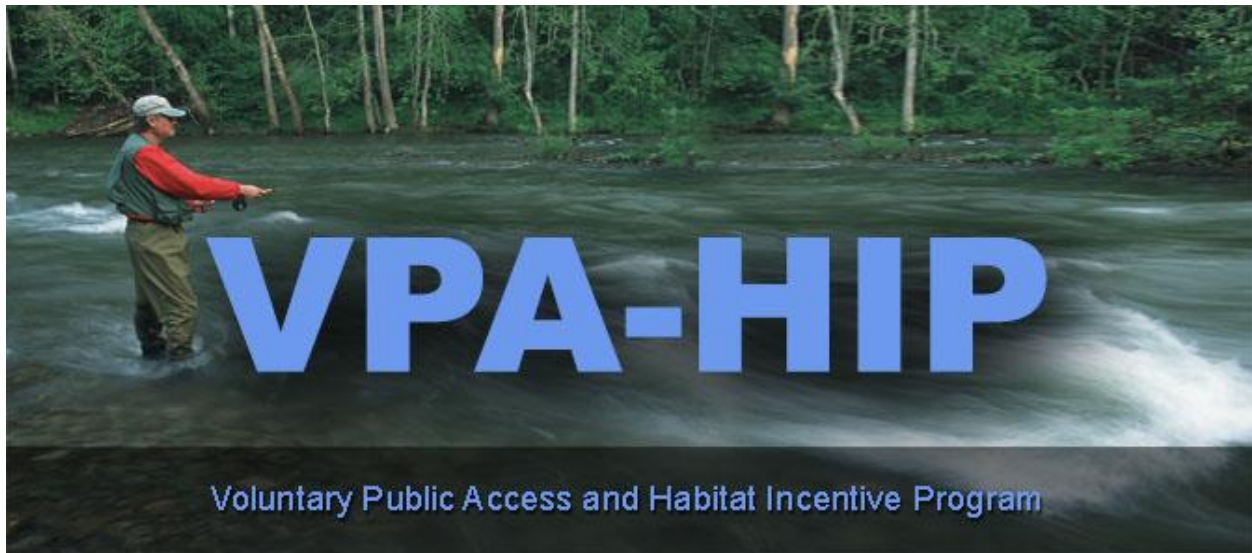
Women in Ag
Opportunities for women to grow, learn from one another, and lead within their industries.

For Youth
Discover new innovation at work in agriculture, support ag in your school, and get connected.

Veterans
Are you a veteran looking to start farming? Find support and resources that were made just for you.

[Get Started >](#) [Learn More >](#) [Get Connected >](#) [Find Resources >](#)

The new web tool is available at www.usda.gov/newfarmers. The site was designed based on feedback from new and beginning farmers and ranchers around the country, who cited unfamiliarity with programs and resources as a challenge to starting and expanding their operations. The site features advice and guidance on everything a new farm business owner needs to know, from writing a business plan, to obtaining a loan to grow their business, to filing taxes as a new small business owner. By answering a series of questions about their operation, farmers can use the site's *Discovery Tool* to build a personalized set of recommendations of USDA programs and services that may meet their needs.



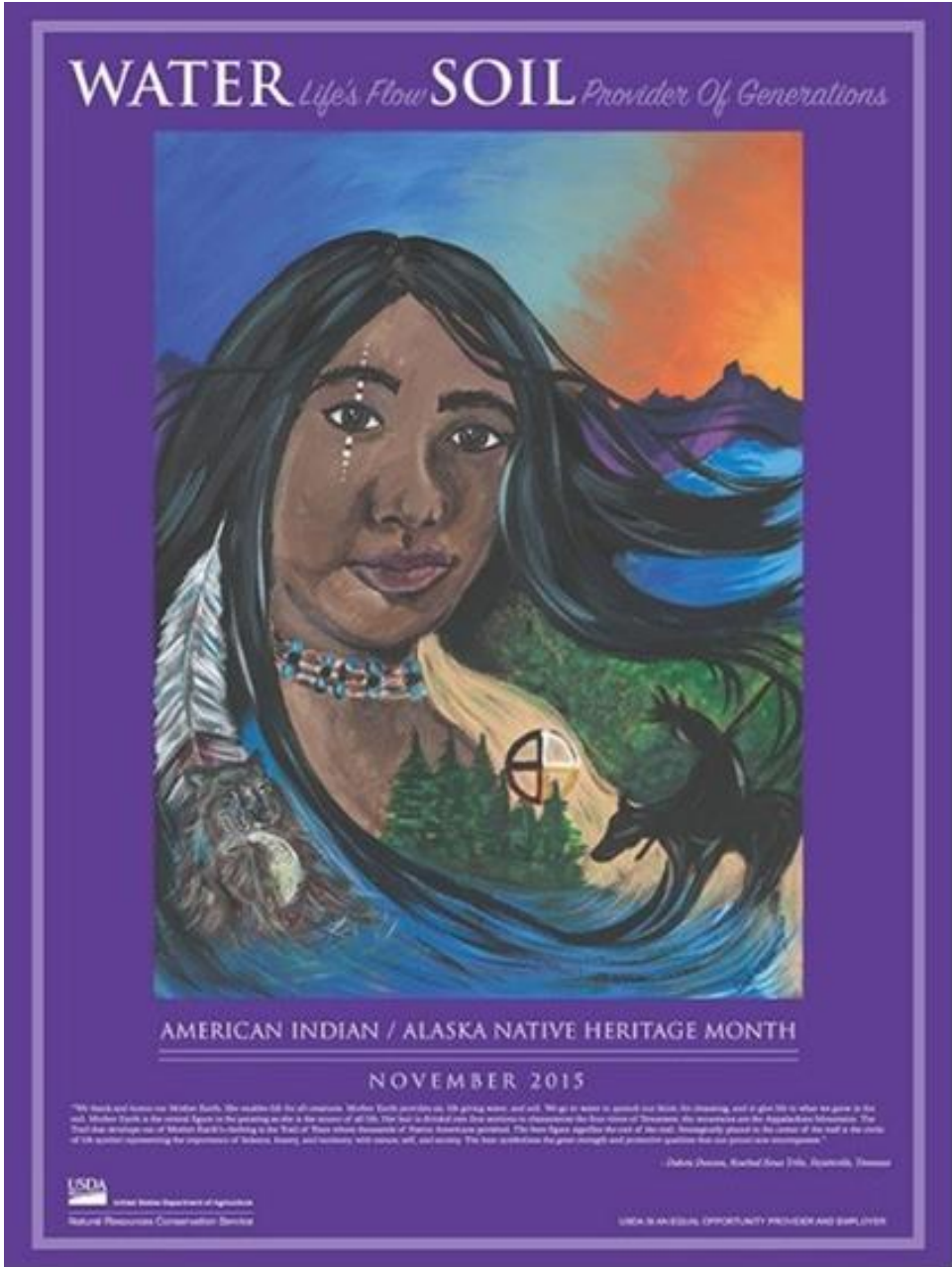
Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack recently announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will invest \$20 million to partner with 15 state agencies to improve wildlife habitat and enhance public access for recreational opportunities on private farm, ranch and forest lands. The projects are being funded under the Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentives Program.

Nebraska Game and Parks will receive \$1.35 million to expand their current public access program. The Open Fields and Waters program opens private land to hunting, fishing and other public recreation activities.

Under the Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentives Program, state and tribal governments apply for grants to encourage owners and operators of privately held farm, ranch or forest land to voluntarily open that land for public wildlife-dependent recreation activities such as fishing, hunting and birding. State and tribal governments may use VPA-HIP funds to create new public access programs, to expand existing public access programs, and to improve wildlife habitat on enrolled public access program lands. Projects can span up to three years.

More detailed information about the fiscal year 2015 awardees is available at the NRCS [VPA-HIP website](#). More information about the Nebraska grant is available from Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. Game and Parks publishes a Nebraska Public Access Atlas, which includes Open Field and Water access sites, as well as all public lands open to hunting, fishing and trapping. It is available at [OutdoorNebraska.org](#).

NRCS Celebrates American Indian and Alaskan Native Month



Each November, NRCS celebrates American Indian and Alaskan Native (AI/AN) culture by creating a commemorative poster. This year, Rosebud Sioux Tribe artist Dakota Duncan's design was selected as the best depiction of the theme, "Water Life's Flow Soil Provider of Generations" - representing the importance of balance, beauty and harmony with nature, self and society.



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Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, 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 http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html 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.