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[May 2019 NRCS Bulletin on “Preparing for Source Water Protection Activities”](#)

Purpose: Guidance for NRCS staff

Timeline: Expected to be **completed by September 30th**, but will continue into the future.

Goal: To develop priority source water protection (SWP) watersheds and ground water protection areas.

How state SWP programs can help NRCS: The state SWP programs have the best knowledge about the SWP areas that are most impacted or threatened by agriculture or by converting ag or forest lands into developed areas. Working with NRCS on selecting priority SWP areas really requires a conversation, not just sharing GIS map layers. To help NRCS with this effort:

- Some states have started a SWP committee under the NRCS State Technical Committee (STC)
- Some state drinking water programs (SDWPs) have been doing presentations at the STC meetings (e.g., VA, ME, NH, MA)
- Some SDWPs are sitting with the NRCS GIS person to look at priority areas (i.e., VT)
- Some of the New England states have been sharing the [AWWA whiteboard video](#) at NRCS STC meetings.
- Some states have security issues with sharing GIS maps with wellhead and intake locations. However, this issue might be overcome by:
 - Signing an MOU with NRCS
 - Having the water utility share the SWP area instead of the state
 - Adjusting the SWP area so the intake location is not clearly defined by expanding or reshaping to encompass multiple small delineations, or to include additional contributing areas to drinking water sources
 - Not sharing the GIS map layers and instead looking at a state or NRCS state map to determine the SWP areas based on the knowledge of the state SWP program

Connecticut and Oregon Examples: On the next page, you will find some slides with the data layers and evaluation criteria that Connecticut and Oregon used for their NRCS 2018 National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI) SWP Pilot proposals, that has now become a fixed part of the NWQI program. These data layers and criteria serve as good examples for how NRCS is selecting the priority SWP areas in each state for this broader effort to help meet the new requirement in the 2018 Farm Bill that directs ten percent of conservation funding to these areas.

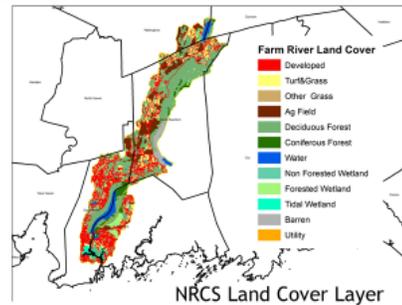
Connecticut - Farm River NWQI SWP Pilot Criteria

▶ Data Layers used to Analyze Source Water Protection Opportunities

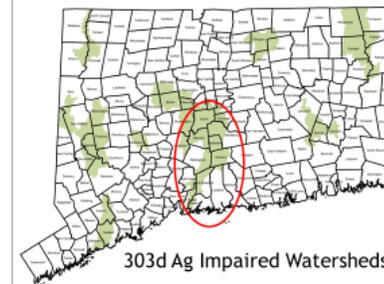
- ▶ NRCS Land Cover Layer
- ▶ 303d Ag Impaired Watersheds
- ▶ Source Water Protection Areas
- ▶ Conservation planning data (NRCS)
- ▶ Financial assistance data (NRCS)

▶ Additional factors

- ▶ Willing participation by producers
- ▶ Number of ag operations



NRCS Land Cover Layer



303d Ag Impaired Watersheds

Oregon's 2018 NWQI SWP Prioritization Criteria

- ✓ Willing watershed partners with capacity
- ✓ Substantial number of potentially willing landowners/producers within sensitive areas
- ✓ Completed Source Water Assessment or Plan
- ✓ Existing monitoring data (to establish baseline)
- ✓ Project would address nutrients, sediment, pathogens, pesticides
- ✓ Harmful Algal Bloom concern in source area
- ✓ Clean Water Act Section 303(d) list for not meeting water quality standards
- ✓ Critical habitat for salmon, steelhead or bull trout
- ✓ Socioeconomic/Environmental Justice issues
- ✓ Located in/near agency focus area (i.e. ODA Strategic Implementation or Focus area, Pesticide Stewardship Partnership area, or groundwater management area)

Oregon NWQI SWP 5 Pilots - \$492,420

- **Project Partner Goals:**
 - Detailed watershed assessment
 - Outreach strategy to address site specific agricultural & forestry impacts to source water quality
- **Project Area Concerns:**
 - Nutrients, sediment, pathogens, pesticides
 - Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs)
 - Wildfire risk
 - Salmon, fish habitat
 - Environmental Justice issues

