

NATIONAL WATER REUSE ACTION PLAN

COMPLETED ACTION

Action 2.12 Leverage Existing U.S. Department of Agriculture Programs to Encourage Consideration and Integration of Agricultural Water Reuse



Background

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) improves the health of the nation's natural resources while sustaining and enhancing the productivity of American agriculture by putting American Farmers First. NRCS leads several voluntary conservation programs that may support local water reuse efforts, including the:

- Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations (WFPO) Program
- Watershed Rehabilitation Program
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- EQIP – Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) Program
- Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)
- Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

Action Team

Action Leader

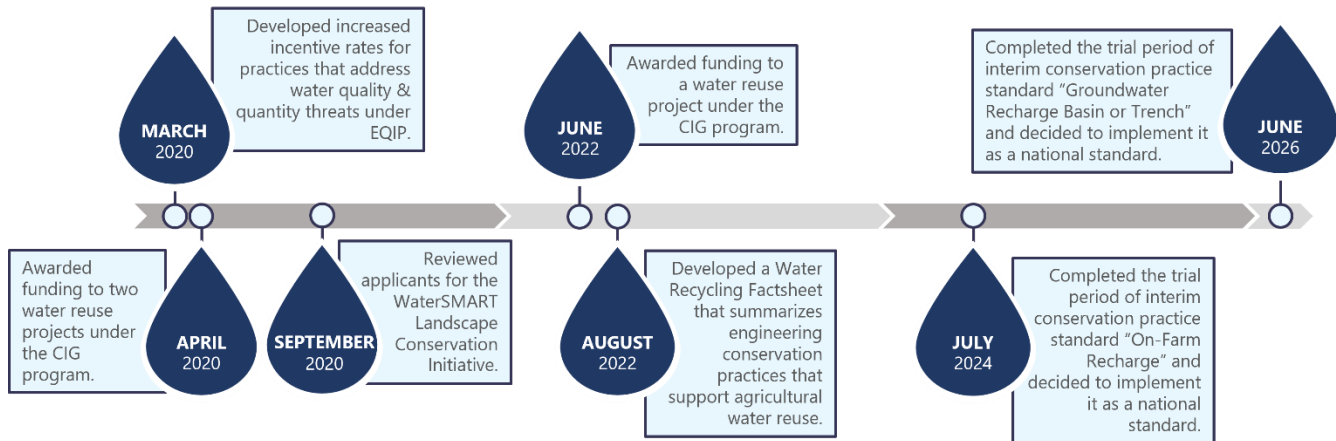
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Under this action, USDA advanced agricultural water reuse by encouraging the consideration and integration of water recycling under these programs. NRCS leveraged its existing programs to award grants, provide technical and financial assistance, and spearhead conservation initiatives related to water reuse.

Accomplishments/Impact

- Clarified and expanded eligibilities under the ACEP, CIG, CSP, EQIP, RCPP, WFPO and other programs to include water reuse strategies. For example, USDA included drought mitigation as an EQIP – Conservation Incentive Contract (CIC) focus area option for fiscal year 2022, thereby expanding the list of eligible conservation practices to include efforts related to water reuse.
- Increased support for agricultural water reuse by awarding grant funding for three water reuse projects under the CIG program.
- Developed a [Water Recycling Factsheet](#) that provides an overview of engineering conservation practices that support agricultural water reuse. These practices may address surface and groundwater depletion concerns when properly planned, designed, implemented, operated and maintained.
- Performed trial periods for two interim [conservation practice standards](#): "Groundwater Recharge Basin or Trench" (Code 815) and "On-Farm Recharge" (Code 817). The data collected during the trial periods demonstrated the effectiveness of these practices, prompting the decision to institute these as national standards.
- Developed increased incentive rates for practices that address water quality and quantity threats to source water (including water reuse) under EQIP.
- Reviewed applications for the WaterSMART Landscape Application Initiative and provided funding for 31 [WaterSMART Initiative](#) priority areas in 10 states in FY2021, including several water reuse projects. As of FY2025, there were 45 ongoing targeted areas.

Action Implementation Process



Potential Future Activity

- Building off the work completed under this action, the USDA – NRCS will move beyond acres and dollars to track real improvements in water management.
- USDA will continue to identify existing programs that could lend themselves to water reuse to enhance the integration of agricultural water reuse and recognize farmers as the heroes of conservation.
- USDA will continue to encourage applicants to relevant programs to develop Farmer First conservation approaches that incorporate water reuse.

Additional Resources

- [USDA/NRCS Water Recycling Factsheet](#)
- [Conservation Practice Standard 815 – Groundwater Recharge Basin or Trench](#)
- [Conservation Practice Standard 817 – On-Farm Recharge](#)