

USDA-NRCS Report by Jennifer Wood, District Conservationist, Jackson LPO January 2024

FY23 NRCS CA Recap – See attached talking points.

Program Deadlines

- There is a February 16th application deadline for Classic EQIP as well as Inflation Reduction Act funding for Climate Smart Practices that include forest, crop, and some rangeland practices. Attached is an application form. Customers should call our office to see if our programs are right for them: 209-714-8045.
- The February 16th application deadline includes the National Air Quality Initiative (NAQI) fund pool that includes Amador, Calaveras and Tuolumne Counties and funds practice 372 Combustion System Improvement to replace tractor engines, as well as some specialty equipment, see attached program description..
- The February 16th is also the deadline for Water Management Entities (a pretty broad definition) to apply for improvements to infrastructure that supplies irrigation water. Please contact the office if you know of an entity that might be qualified and interested. The
- There is an April 5th deadline for the CARCD RCPP forestry practices fund pool, an extension of prior Crisis to Opportunity RCPP. It is funded for 5 more years, with some added practices and somewhat different ranking questions.

Partnerships/Planning

Ongoing

- NRCS is meeting monthly with the ED's of all three ACT RCD's to implement the Tuolumne County RCD (TCRCD) NRCS Cooperative Agreement to assist with technical and financial assistance outreach and navigation for forestry and other working lands operators, with a focus on Historically Underserved groups. This includes Limited Resource producers and operators. The Agreement is meant to assist with organizing the resources to help us all, across all 3 counties, deliver a consistent set of resource opportunities to customers.
- We expect to rank all current forestry applications for funding this year and have enough to keep us more than busy with those. We will want to see another round of applicants for the first RCPP batching period. At the Tuolumne RCD we discussed asking partners for existing unfunded projects in their pipeline before doing a community wide outreach effort. We have over 50 rangeland applications, with more arriving weekly. We are slowly working through them with the Rangeland Management Specialist from Auburn, the Engineer, and the District Conservationist.
- Applications are accepted year-round. However, it is unlikely new rangeland applicants will get a site visit in time for FY24 funding opportunities due to the backlog.
- There are many opportunities to assist the Tribes, and building relationships with the Tribes is a priority for the Area and the office. There is also a fund pool specifically for Native American owners and operators.

Natural Resources Conservation Service
12200 B Airport Road
Jackson, CA 95642
Phone 2097-14-8045

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

Staff

- A Point Blue Affiliate Biologist, Sophia Leveque-Eichorn will be starting on Jan 8, located in Sonora at the MLRA Soil Survey Office in the Forest Service Building. This will be a huge help with bird nesting surveys, range health assessments, wildlife practice planning, and wildlife beneficial- informed implementation requirements. She will also be assisting the Mariposa NRCS field office.
- An Affiliate Forester position with the Tuolumne RCD is starting on January 15. He is expected to focus on RCPP clients in Tuolumne and potentially Calaveras Counties.
- The assistance we can get from the NRCS Auburn Office Rangeland Conservationist is limited. There is still a GS 9-11 vacancy for a Rangeland Conservationist on the staffing plan for our office.
- Current staff: District Conservationist Jennifer Wood, Engineer Bradley Soares and Forester Garrett McFall. Tamryn Zahradka is the ACRCDD Forester and an NRCS affiliate who is assisting with NRCS forestry customers.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and Conservation Incentives Program (CIC)

- Administration of 50 active conservation contracts to treat over 20,000 acres is ongoing, with 3.46 million dollars obligated.
- We initiated a total of 11 FY23 contracts obligating approximately \$500,000 on approximately 3500 acres for range and forestry conservation activities.

Summary of FY23 contracts by county

FY '23 Contracts	Amador	Calaveras	Tuolumne
Range	1 EQIP, 1 CSP	1 EQIP, 2 CSP	1 CSP
Forestry	1 EQIP, 1 CSP	1 EQIP	1EQIP
Disaster			1EQIP

We will submit at least 3x this for funding in 2024 and the funding outlook looks positive.

Natural Resources Conservation Service
12200 B Airport Road
Jackson, CA 95642
Phone 2097-14-8045

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

CONSERVATION PROGRAM APPLICATION

Applicant (Decision Maker):	Application Date:
Address:	Location where assistance is requested:
Email:	
Telephone:	Receive text messages (optional):
Assistance Requested:	

Click here for [instructions](#) to complete this form or contact the local office for assistance.

1. Do you have a customer record with the Farm Service Agency (FSA)?

Yes No

2. Interested in participating in the following (select all that apply):

- Agricultural Conservation Easement Program-Wetland Reserve Easement (ACEP-WRE)
- Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA)
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

a) Program enrollment type, activity type, and/or project name, as applicable:

3. Applicant Information:

Select the business structure and enter the legal name, and tax identification number for all applicants who will be participants on the contract or agreement including the decision maker.

Business Structure (Mark with an X)		Applicant Legal Name	Tax Number (last four digits)
Individual	Entity		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

To add more applicants, complete [NRCS-CPA-1200 Continuation Page](#), Applicant Information and attach to this form.

a) If applicant is a legal entity or joint operation, do you have appropriate documents including proof to sign for the entity or joint operation?

Yes No N/A

b) Complete the table below for all applicants who meet the requirements for one or more of the historically underserved categories. Refer to the instructions on page 4, to learn more about the requirements. If none, leave blank. (optional)

Applicant Legal Name	Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher	Beginning Farmer or Rancher	Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher	Veteran Farmer or Rancher	Veteran Discharge Date
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

4. **Land Information.** The following questions apply to the land being offered for enrollment through this application.

a) **Land Type (check all that apply):**

- Private Land
- Public Land: Federal Government State Government Local Government
- Indian Land: Allotted Tribal Trust Land Tribal Non-Trust Land Other

b) **Control of Land Documentation (check all that apply):**

- Deed or other evidence of land ownership
- Written lease agreement

Other agreement or legal conveyance (describe):

c) **Is the land currently enrolled in other USDA conservation program(s)?**

- Yes No

Which program(s):

d) **Organic Certification:**

- Certified Organic by the National Organic Program (NOP)
- Transitioning to become Certified Organic by the NOP
- Exempt from Organic Certification as defined by the NOP
- Not Applicable

e) **What is the primary crop type(s)?**

f) **What is the primary livestock type(s)?**

The applicant agrees not to start any financially assisted conservation practice or activity or engage the reimbursable services of a certified technical service provider before an obligating document is executed by NRCS. The applicant understands that if they start a conservation practice or activity prior to NRCS executing an obligation the applicant will be ineligible to receive payment for the conservation practice or activity. The applicant may request a waiver to begin a conservation practice or activity early by submitting their written request to the applicable NRCS State Conservationist. Applicants must provide NRCS with written authorization from the landowner to install structural or vegetative practices on leased land included in this application.

The applicant acknowledges that they have or will file all other required eligibility information including highly erodible land conservation/wetland conservation certifications, adjusted gross income certifications, and member information for entities and joint operations with the FSA, as applicable, prior to NRCS approving an agreement based on this application.

The applicant may obtain a copy of the applicable conservation program contract appendix, which defines the full terms and conditions of program participation at the local NRCS office.

Check here if NRCS-CPA-1200 Continuation Page, Applicant Information is attached.

Applicant Signature	Date
----------------------------	-------------

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, 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 [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.

Instructions for NRCS-CPA-1200, Conservation Program Application

This form is used to apply for program assistance.

Field Name	Instruction
Applicant (Decision Maker)	Enter the name of the decision maker who is authorized to make decisions pertaining to the application and whose name will be displayed on the NRCS contract or agreement documents if selected for funding.
Application Date	Enter the date of application submission.
Address/Email	Enter mailing address and email address for communication with the decision maker.
Location where assistance is requested	Enter the location of the land where assistance is requested, which may include County and State, farm and tract numbers, etc.
Telephone	Enter the telephone number where decision maker may be contacted.
To receive text message(s)	Enter a primary and/or secondary mobile number if you would like to receive text messages. This is optional.
Assistance Requested	Describe the type of assistance needed. Provide details of what you seek to accomplish through this application.
Question 1	Mark 'Yes' if you have records established with FSA. If answering 'No', NRCS will assist you with determining which records must be established to continue processing your application. Note: All persons or legal entities listed in question 3 will also need records with FSA for NRCS to determine eligibility.
Question 2	Select the conservation program(s) you are applying to participate in. It may be necessary to sign a new application if you decide to change your program selection(s).
Question 2a (optional)	Enter the program enrollment type(s) applying to participate in. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter CSP-Renewal if applying to renew a CSP contract. • Enter EQIP-CIC if applying for an EQIP conservation incentive contract • For ACEP-WRE, enter "Permanent Easement", "30-Year Easement", or "30-Year Contract with Tribes" • For RCPP, activity type includes: Land Management, Rental, US Held Easements. The RCPP project name may be entered if known. <p>Note: Do not use this form for the following programs: ACEP-ALE or RCPP Entity Held Easements, Supplemental Agreements, or Watershed Activities. To apply for one of these programs, follow this link or contact NRCS for additional information.</p>
Question 3	Provide the legal identity of each party seeking participation through this application. Indicate whether each applicant is an individual or an entity and enter the legal name and last four digits of tax identification number.
Question 3a	For each applicant that is a legal entity, documentation of sufficient signature authority is required for anyone signing on behalf of the entity.
Question 3b (optional)	If applicable, mark the appropriate box(s) for each applicant meeting one or more of the definitions for the historically underserved categories below. Applicants that mark Veteran Farmer or Rancher must also provide the date of discharge. <p>Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher – The term "Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher" means a participant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With direct or indirect gross farm sales not more than the current indexed value in each of the previous two years, and • Who has a total household income at or below the national poverty level for a family of four, or less than 50 percent of county median household income in each of the previous two years. <p>A legal entity or joint operation can be a Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher only if all individual members independently qualify. A Self-Determination Tool is available to the public and may be completed on-line or printed and completed hardcopy at: https://lrftool.sc.egov.usda.gov/</p> <p>Beginning Farmer or Rancher – The term "Beginning Farmer or Rancher" means a participant who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has not operated a farm or ranch, or who has operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 consecutive years. This requirement applies to all members of a legal entity, and • Who will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm or ranch. <p>In the case of a contract with an individual, individually or with the immediate family, material and substantial participation requires that the individual provide substantial day-to-day labor and management of the farm or ranch, consistent with the practices in the county or State where the farm is located.</p> <p>In the case of a contract made with a legal entity, all members must materially and substantially</p>

	<p>participate in the operation of the farm or ranch. Material and substantial participation requires that the members provide some amount of the management, or labor and management necessary for day-to-day activities, such that if the members did not provide these inputs, operation of the farm or ranch would be seriously impaired.</p> <p>Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher – The term “Socially Disadvantaged” means an individual or entity who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group. For an entity, at least 50 percent ownership in the farm business must be held by socially disadvantaged individuals. A socially disadvantaged group is a group whose members have been subject to racial or ethnic prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities.</p> <p>These groups consist of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American Indians or Alaskan Natives • Asians • Blacks or African Americans • Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders • Hispanics. <p>Note: Gender alone is not a covered group for the purposes of NRCS conservation programs. The term entities reflect a broad interpretation to include partnerships, couples, legal entities, etc.</p> <p>Veteran Farmer or Rancher – The term "Veteran Farmer or Rancher" means a producer who served in the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, or Coast Guard, including the reserve component thereof; was released from service under conditions other than dishonorable; and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has not operated a farm or ranch, or has operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 years; or • who first obtained status as a veteran during the most recent 10-year period. <p>A legal entity or joint operation can be a Veteran Farmer or Rancher only if all individual members independently qualify.</p>
Question 4	Enter information regarding the land being offered for enrollment in a conservation program.
Question 4a	Check the applicable box(s) identifying the type of land included in the application.
Question 4b	Check the applicable box(s) that support the documented control for the land being offered for enrollment in a conservation program. Note: A deed or evidence of ownership is required for all ACEP-WRE and RCPP easement applications.
Question 4c	Mark 'Yes' if the land in this application is currently enrolled in another USDA conservation program under an active contract or agreement and list the program(s) in the space provided. Otherwise, mark 'No'.
Question 4d	Check the applicable box acknowledging organic status of the operation. Mark 'N/A' if this application is for an operation not in organic-related production. Certification in any of these categories is to assist with planning and will not automatically result in the application being considered in any initiatives made available for organic-related production. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certified Organic Producer must maintain organic certification for the life of the contract. • Transition Organic Producer must self-certify that agree to develop and implement an Organic System Plan (OSP). • Organic Producers selling less than \$5,000 per year will need to self-certify that agree to develop and implement an Organic System Plan (OSP). Note: Applicants must specifically request to participate in an organic initiative.
Question 4e	Enter the predominant crop type(s) produced by the operation.
Question 4f	Enter the predominant livestock type(s) produced by the operation.

Note: If this application is selected for funding, it is the responsibility of the participants under a program contract or agreement to provide accurate information to support all items addressed in this application at the request of NRCS. False certifications are subject to criminal and civil fraud statutes. Each participant listed for share of the payment must provide an SF-1199A, Direct Deposit Form to proceed with contract execution. All participants that certify land control or certify eligibility as Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher, Beginning Farmer or Rancher, or Veteran Farmer or Rancher, will provide all records necessary to justify their claim as requested by a NRCS representative.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary, conservation program administered by NRCS that can provide financial and technical assistance to install conservation practices that address priority natural resource concerns.

- In consultation with the State Technical Committee and Local Work Groups, the State Conservationist has developed ranking pools and ranking criteria to focus EQIP funding for priority resource concerns and initiatives.
- NRCS uses the Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool (CART) to assess the site vulnerability, existing conditions, and identify potential resource concerns on a unit of land. After CART assessment, NRCS uses CART Ranking to evaluate an application in all applicable ranking pools.
- The State Conservationist establishes batching periods to select the highest ranked applications for funding, contract approval is dependent on program eligibility determinations.
- Any interested farmer or rancher may submit an application for participation in EQIP.

About the National Air Quality Initiative (NAQI)

Under the Agricultural Act of 2018, the Secretary shall provide eligible producers with technical and financial opportunities to address serious air quality concerns from agricultural operations and help meet regulatory requirements.

In Fiscal Year 2024 (FY2024), the NAQI ranking pool is designed to help agricultural producers meet air quality compliance requirements and offer opportunities to support practices that reduce oxides of nitrogen (NO_x), volatile organic compounds (VOC), and particulate matter (PM) emissions from agricultural sources. Reducing emissions helps achieve and maintain the health- and welfare-based National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) in California.

Financial assistance priority is targeted toward counties identified as having significant air quality resource concerns based on the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) “nonattainment” designations for the applicable 8-hour Ozone NAAQS, the 24-hour PM₁₀ or PM_{2.5} NAAQS and/or the annual PM_{2.5} NAAQS; or, predesignated as “Attainment (Maintenance Area)” for PM₁₀ or PM_{2.5}. These areas experience air pollution levels that persistently exceed the NAAQS established through the Clean Air Act.

The applicable nonattainment designation maps from EPA Region 9 are included with this program description.

The following information supports the NAQI nonattainment area priorities:

- List of “Nonattainment Counties for All Criteria Pollutants”:
<https://www3.epa.gov/airquality/greenbook/ancl.html#CA>
- PM₁₀ (1987) Maintenance Areas: <https://www3.epa.gov/airquality/greenbook/pmcs.html#CA>
- PM_{2.5} (2006) Maintenance Areas: <https://www3.epa.gov/airquality/greenbook/rmcs.html#CA>

The NAQI funding pool priority is supported by the California NRCS 2020-25 Five-Year Strategic Plan for improving air quality associated with agricultural operations by addressing ozone and particulate matter in nonattainment areas and to maximize emissions reductions through NRCS air quality projects.

For FY2024, interested owners and operators of land managed for agricultural production within an EPA designated “nonattainment” area or predesignated PM “attainment (maintenance area)” area as described above within the following counties may be eligible for the National Air Quality Initiative. Any lands managed within counties or partial counties designated by EPA as “attainment” or “unclassified” are not applicable to this ranking pool.

Alameda, Butte, Calaveras, Contra Costa, El Dorado, Fresno, Imperial, Inyo, Kern, Kings, Los Angeles, Madera, Marin, Mariposa, Merced, Mono, Napa, Nevada, Orange, Placer, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, Sonoma, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tuolumne, Tulare, Ventura, Yolo, and Yuba.

The conservation treatment for the National Air Quality Initiative is to reduce NOx, VOC (ROG-reactive organic gases) and PM emissions through the removal from service and permanent destruction of:

- A fully functional in-use off-road mobile agricultural equipment rated at 25 or more brake-horsepower (bhp) and powered and self-propelled by an uncontrolled (Tier 0) or a Tier 1 or Tier 2 diesel-fueled emissions-certified nonroad compression-ignition engine; and,
- Replace with a new “like” off-road mobile agricultural equipment rated at 25 or more bhp (**not exceeding 125 percent of the baseline horsepower rating**) and powered and self-propelled by a new nonroad diesel-fueled compression-ignition engine meeting Tier 4-Final emissions certification, as determined by the applicable EPA Engine Family Name and State of California Air Resources Board (ARB) Executive Order (or EPA Certificate of Conformity, when applicable). Emissions certified as Tier 4-Final under a Family Emissions Level (FEL) value that exceeds any emissions standard (STD) value or Interim Tier 4 under an EPA or ARB Flexibility Provision will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis for equivalency with 2023 or 2024 model-year standards.

Significant emission reduction benefits are achieved when higher-polluting off-road agricultural equipment are retired earlier than through normal turnover and replaced with new “like” equipment powered by emissions-certified nonroad diesel engines that serves the same function and performs equivalent work to the equipment being replaced. The minimum emission benefits will result in at least a 30 percent reduction in NOx emissions and no increase in PM emissions. The applicable NRCS Conservation Practice Standard (CPS) is 372 – *Combustion System Improvement*.

Equipment horsepower is based on the manufacturer’s advertised brake- or gross-horsepower rating of the equipment make and model. To establish baseline conditions, the participant must own and operate the existing in-use equipment for at least 24 consecutive months (two years) from the date of contract application. Soon after replacement, the existing in-use equipment is destroyed and scrapped to ensure the emissions reductions are permanent. Please refer to CPS 372-Specifications for more information.

Off-road mobile equipment powered and self-propelled by nonroad diesel engines and used exclusively in agriculture are applicable for the NAQI (e.g. “L” designation in the EPA Engine Family Name on Tier-certified engines).

Examples of equipment used in agriculture and **applicable** for NAQI:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| • Wheeled Tractors | • Surface Harvesters | • Sprayers |
| • Tracked Tractors | • Forage Harvesters | • Sweepers |
| • Bulldozers | • Combines | • Backhoe Loaders |
| • Harrowbeds | • Swathers | • Articulating Loaders |
| • Class V Forklifts | • Shakers | • Skid-Steer Loaders |
| • Rough-Terrain Forklifts | • Tillers | • Skip Loaders |
| | | • Conditioners |

Examples of diesel-powered equipment used in agriculture and **not applicable** for NAQI:

- On-road trucks
- Off-highway trucks
- Dump trucks
- Water trucks or wagons
- Bale squeeze trucks
- Cranes
- Manure spreaders
- All-terrain vehicles
- Portable elevators
- Irrigation engines
- Gensets
- Stationary or portable engines
- Farm implements
- Pull-behind sprayers
- Equipment not in-use or none-functional
- Equipment powered with spark-ignition engines
- In-use equipment powered with Tier 3 or 4 diesel engines
- Equipment rated at less than 25 bhp
- Forklifts, other than Class V or Rough-Terrain
- Forklifts designed for mounting on a carrier
- Equipment fueled by gasoline, LPG, natural gas, or fuels or blends other than diesel, renewable diesel, or biodiesel

Five worksheets are included at the end of this fund pool description:

1. California In-Use Existing Equipment/Engine (Baseline) Worksheet and Instructions;
2. California New Equipment/Engine Worksheet (Proposed) and Instructions;
3. California Equipment/Engine Destruction Certification Worksheet;
4. California Emissions Calculation Worksheet.
5. San Joaquin Valley Annual Reporting Worksheet

The first two worksheets are for the applicant to document the proposed in-use and new nonroad engines and equipment information for submittal to the NRCS with an EQIP application.

The third worksheet may be used by the participant to document equipment and engine destruction and disposal in accordance with *CPS 372-Specifications*.

The fourth worksheet is used by the conservation planner and/or the participant for calculating the estimated emissions and emission reductions associated with the conservation practice.

The fifth worksheet is for *San Joaquin Valley participants* providing annual reports to the NRCS that documents their new equipment usage over the 10-year practice lifespan.

California Air Resources Board State Implementation Plan (SIP) for the San Joaquin Valley

Beginning in 2009, a partnership developed with agricultural stakeholders and representatives from the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD), California Air Resources Board (ARB), US EPA, and USDA NRCS. The objective was to identify the mechanisms where *voluntary measures* through incentive-based emission reductions could receive credit towards meeting California's State Implementation Plan (SIP) goals for the San Joaquin Valley. The overall benefits would account for improvements to air quality, public health and welfare, and progress toward attaining the NAAQS pursuant to the Clean Air Act through voluntary measures, thereby postponing or perhaps eliminating any action by ARB to adopt new mobile farm equipment prohibitory rules and regulations.

Applying voluntary incentive-based emission reductions through programs like EQIP towards SIP emission reduction goals had never been tried before. As ARB and SJVAPCD also administer their own respective voluntary incentive programs, this direction led toward the SJVAPCD adopting Rule 9610 in June 2013. Rule 9610 ensures the emission reductions achieved through voluntary incentive programs in the San Joaquin Valley become eligible for SIP credit in accordance with the Clean Air Act.

In October 2018, ARB adopted their “*Valley State Strategy*” by including new regulatory- and incentive-based control measures for reducing NO_x and PM_{2.5} emissions under the “*San Joaquin Valley Supplement to the 2016 Strategy for the State Implementation Plan*”. The Valley State Strategy commitments for improving off-road mobile agricultural equipment seeks 11 tons of NO_x per day reductions for the San Joaquin Valley by 2024. Voluntary measures through State and Federal incentive funding along with participating producer investments will continue as important strategies for achieving this and any future emission reduction goals.

Included with *CPS 372-Operations and Maintenance*, San Joaquin Valley producers participating in the National Air Quality Initiative are to provide NRCS with annual reports of their new equipment usage over the duration of the practice 10-year lifespan. This information is used to qualify equipment operations and quantify the on-going emission reductions to ensure the air quality benefits continue. The NRCS submits aggregated emissions summary reports to the SJVAPCD, ARB and EPA annually, void of any information deemed as confidential, by reporting the creditable emission reductions achieved in the San Joaquin Valley through EQIP funding for SIP consideration.

EPA, ARB and SJVAPCD continue to search for science-based and cost-effective emission reductions from agriculture as new strategies for deploying the cleanest emissions technologies are developed. NRCS and its partners will continue to support voluntary approaches for addressing the air quality resource concerns in the San Joaquin Valley and other air quality challenged regions in California.

More information on the San Joaquin Valley SIP and diesel engines powering off-road mobile agricultural equipment can be found by visiting the ARB and SJVAPCD websites:

- ARB Agricultural Equipment Regulation: <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/our-work/programs/mobile-agricultural-equipment>
- ARB 2007 State Strategy: <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/resources/documents/2007-state-strategy-californias-state-implementation-plan-sip-federal-pm25-and>
- ARB 2018 SJV Supplement to the 2016 State Strategy: <https://www.arb.ca.gov/planning/sip/2016sip/valleystrategy.pdf>
- ARB 2019 SJV Agricultural Equipment Incentive Measure: <https://ww3.arb.ca.gov/planning/sip/imp2016sip/agmeasure.pdf>
- SJVAPCD Rule 9610: http://www.valleyair.org/rules/curnrules/9610_CleanRule.pdf
- SJVAPCD Rule 9610 Procedures: http://www.valleyair.org/MOP/mop9610_idx.htm

Land Uses for the NAQI Ranking Pool

Only applications for agricultural operations that address resource concerns on at least one land use type listed below will be considered for financial assistance from this EQIP Fund Pool. The descriptions below are the general NRCS land use definitions - applications should fit within, but do not need to exactly match, these descriptions.

- **Crop:** Land used primarily for the production and harvest of annual or perennial field, forage, food, fiber, horticultural, orchard, vineyard, or energy crops.
- **Pasture:** Land composed of introduced or domesticated native forage species that is used primarily for the production of livestock. Pastures receive periodic renovation and cultural treatments, such as tillage, fertilization, mowing, weed control, and may be irrigated. Pastures are not in rotation with crops.

- **Range:** Land used primarily for the production of grazing animals. Includes native plant communities and those seeded to native or introduced species or naturalized by introduced species that are ecologically managed using range management principles.
- **Forest:** Land on which the primary vegetation is tree cover (climax, natural or introduced plant community) and use is primarily for production of wood products or non-timber forest products.
- **Farmstead:** Land used for facilities and supporting infrastructure where farming, forestry, animal husbandry, and ranching activities are often initiated. This may include dwellings, equipment storage, plus farm input and output storage and handling facilities.

Resource Concerns for the NAQI Ranking Pool

The objective in conservation planning is to help each client attain sustainable use and sound management of soil, water, air, plant, animal, and energy resources, based on related human considerations (SWAPA+H).

SWAPA+H	Resource Concern	Resource Concern Component
Air	Air Quality Emissions	Emissions of ozone precursors
		Emissions of particulate matter (PM) and PM precursors
		Emissions of airborne reactive nitrogen

Emissions of Ozone Precursors: Ozone (O₃) precursor gases are oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs), which chemically react in the atmosphere to produce ground-level ozone. Ozone is not directly emitted pollutant but is formed in the atmosphere through chemical reactions of NO_x and VOCs in the presence of sunlight, where it's reactivity can be influenced by ambient heat. Though ozone in the upper atmosphere forms a layer that provides protection from ultraviolet radiation, ambient ozone in the lower atmosphere and at ground level can be harmful to public health, plants and animals. Sources of NO_x and VOC come from naturally occurring "biogenic sources" and from "anthropogenic sources" that include livestock activities, pesticide application, solvent and gasoline storage and use, nitrification-denitrification processes, and combustion from boilers, heaters, engines and open burning.

Emissions of Particulate Matter (PM) and PM Precursors: Particulate Matter is classified by its size where PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ have an aerodynamic mean diameter of less than 2.5 and 10 micrometers, respectively. PM_{2.5} is directly emitted to the atmosphere by combustion processes (e.g. diesel exhaust emissions and smoke from open burning) and by mechanical means (e.g. dust from unpaved roads or tillage activities). PM_{2.5} is also formed in the atmosphere by chemical reactions of PM precursor gases that include NO_x, VOC, and ammonia (NH₃). PM precursor sources include combustion activities, fertilizer application, and animal operations. Much of PM₁₀ is mechanically generated and directly emitted to the atmosphere by actions that disaggregate the soil such as tillage operations, roads and field travel, animal movement, harvesting activities, bulk material storage and handling, and wind erosion. Larger, visible PM is often geologic in origin or smoke from combustion and will range in different sizes to include PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀.

Emissions of Airborne Reactive Nitrogen: Airborne reactive nitrogen describes many nitrogen-containing compounds associated with atmospheric chemical reactions that contribute to unwanted ecosystem effects. As the primary pollutants of concern are NH₃ and NO_x, airborne reactive nitrogen contributes to excess fertilization of sensitive ecosystems, eutrophication of water bodies, regional visibility degradation, and impacts to atmospheric chemistry. Ammonia is mainly emitted from fertilizer application and animal operations. Combustion from boilers, heaters, engines and open burning are the main sources of agricultural NO_x emissions, though to a lesser degree soils and manure management activities will also emit NO_x.

Conservation Practices for the NAQI Ranking Pool

All conservation practices planned for financial assistance must be included in the *Plan of Operations* and address a resource concern in the applicant's conservation plan. Payments are based on the manufacturer's advertised new vehicle or equipment brake- or gross-horsepower rating. NRCS conservation practices applicable for financial assistance through this EQIP Initiative are listed in the below table.

Practice Code	Conservation Practice Name	Practice Payment Scenario	Units	Lifespan
372	Combustion System Improvement	Mobile IC, 25-160 bhp	no	10 years
372	Combustion System Improvement	Mobile IC, >160 bhp	no	10 years

The Combustion System Improvement Practice Standard and more information are available on-line at:

- CPS 372 – Combustion System Improvement:
[Conservation Practice Standard Combustion System Improvement \(Code 372\) \(usda.gov\)](#)
- CPS 372 – Specifications:
[Practice Specification for CPS Combustion System Improvement \(Code 372\) \(usda.gov\)](#)
- CPS 372 – Operations and Maintenance
[Operation and Maintenance for CPS Combustion System Improvement \(Code 372\) \(usda.gov\)](#)
- CPS 372 – Implementation Requirements
[California | Field Office Technical Guide | NRCS - USDA](#)
- CA Air Quality Tech Note 1 – Glossary for California Off-Road Agricultural Engines
[TN_AQ01_CPS372-EngineGlossary_11-16.pdf \(usda.gov\)](#)
- CA Air Quality Tech Note 2 – Engine Family and Tier-Certified Emission Standards
[TN-AQ02-CPS372_EngineFamilyName-TIER_Standards.pdf \(usda.gov\)](#)
- CA Air Quality Tech Note 3 – State Implementation Plan Creditability of Voluntary Incentive-Based Emission Reductions from Replacing Off-Road Mobile Agricultural Equipment
[TN-AQ-03_CPS372_SIP_Creditability.pdf \(usda.gov\)](#)

Visit the following website for NRCS conservation practice standards:

[Conservation Practice Standards | Natural Resources Conservation Service \(usda.gov\)](#)

Interested EQIP Applicants

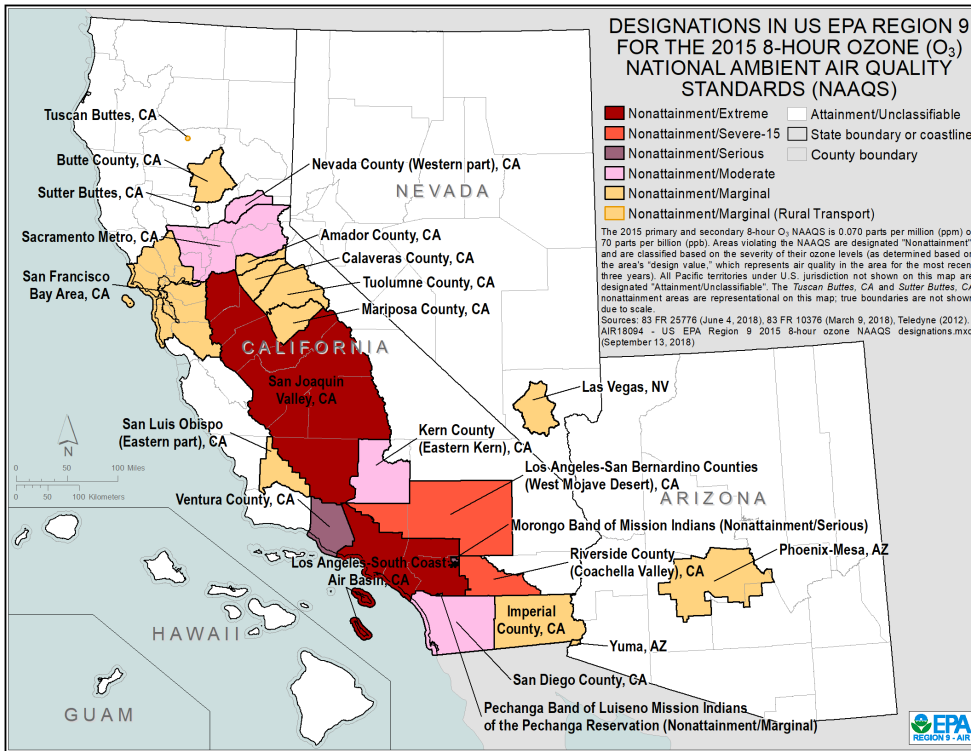
Interested owners and operators of land managed for agricultural production within a nonattainment [or attainment (maintenance area)] area for the following counties may be eligible for the National Air Quality Initiative: **Alameda, Butte, Calaveras, Contra Costa, El Dorado, Fresno, Imperial, Inyo, Kern, Kings, Los Angeles, Madera, Marin, Mariposa, Merced, Mono, Napa, Nevada, Orange, Placer, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, Sonoma, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tuolumne, Tulare, Ventura, Yolo, and Yuba.**

For more information about EQIP, how to apply and program eligibility, interested applicants should contact a NRCS field office in the county which you own land or where you have an agricultural operation.

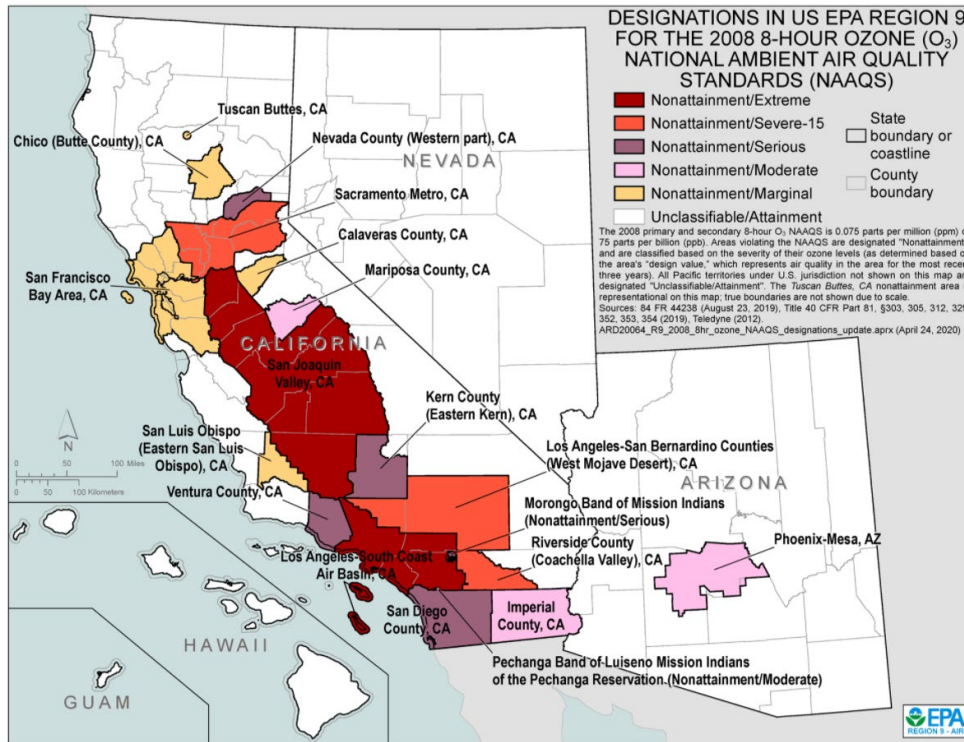
Visit <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/> to find the NRCS representative for your county.

Applicable EPA Region 9 Area Designation Maps

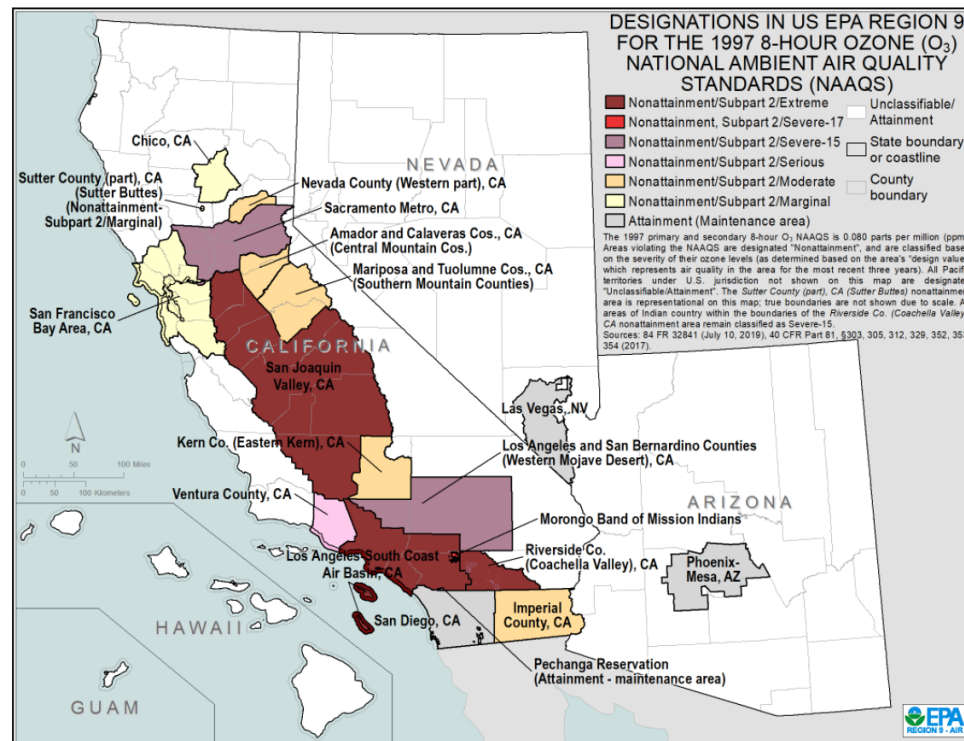
2015 8-hour Ozone NAAQS:



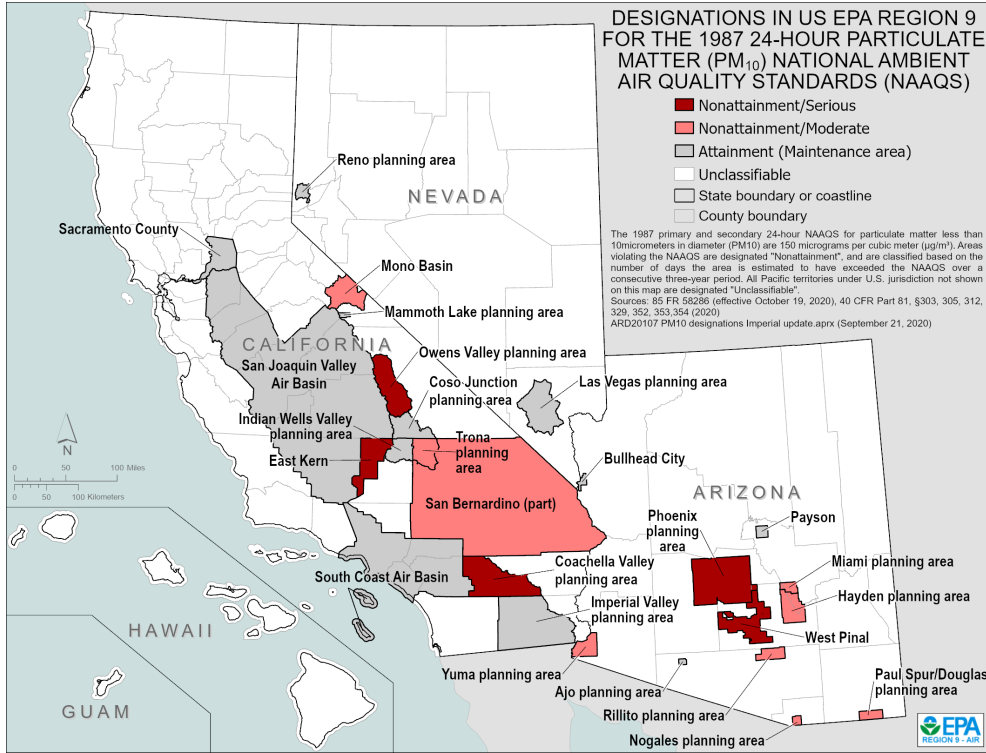
2008 8-hour Ozone NAAQS:



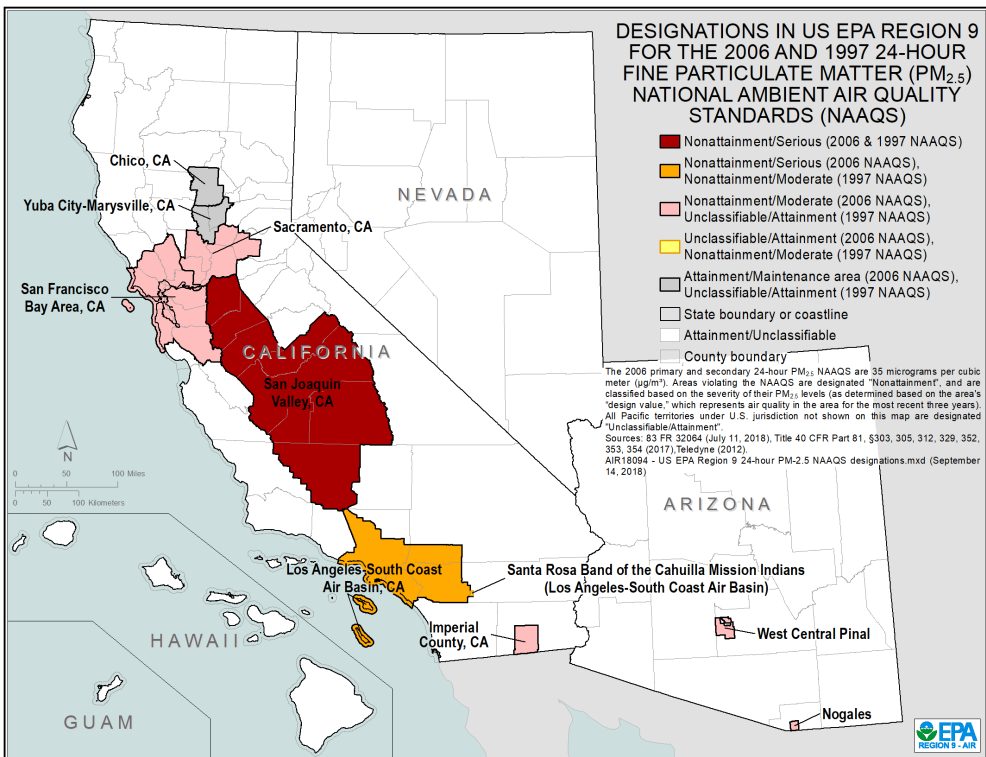
1997 8-Hour Ozone NAAQS



1987 24-hour PM10 NAAQS:



2006 and 1997 24-hour PM_{2.5} NAAQS:



1997 and 2012 Primary Annual PM_{2.5} NAAQS:

