

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

RFP0278 - Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control Program (ANPSACP)

New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets

Round 29 – Information for Applicants

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This Request for Proposals (RFP) applies to proposals submitted for funding consideration from the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF).

The New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee (State Committee) invites Soil and Water Conservation Districts, or groups of Districts acting jointly, to submit proposals for funding under the Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control Program. Program funds are available for nonpoint source abatement and control projects that plan (AEM Tier III) or implement (AEM Tier IV) Agricultural Best Management Practice Systems on New York State farms. All projects must consist of activities that will reduce, abate, control, or prevent nonpoint source pollution originating from agricultural sources. Applications must be for ONE of the following: planning activities (AEM Tier III), OR implementation (AEM Tier IV).

1.2 Goal of the Program

Led by the New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee, in coordination with the Department of Agriculture and Markets, the goal of the Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control Program is to reduce and or prevent the nonpoint source contribution from agricultural activities in watersheds across the state. The program utilizes the Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) framework and provides cost-share funds through Soil and Water Conservation Districts for activities, plans and the implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) Systems, as defined in Section 3 of the Soil and Water Conservation Districts Law.

1.3 Available Funding

The State Committee has made available approximately \$13.5 million for Round 29 competitive projects. Funding was appropriated in the State Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Budget.

1.4 Eligible Applicants

Proposals for funding will be accepted from Soil and Water Conservation Districts, or a group of Districts acting jointly, who will be referred to as "Project Sponsors." Groups of Districts acting jointly should submit one application with one district assuming lead sponsor status. It will be the lead sponsor's responsibility to ensure the project is completed and necessary reports are accepted and filed with the New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee.

2. DESCRIPTION OF WORK TO BE PERFORMED

2.1 Eligible Projects

Applicants must propose to do **ONE** of the following:

- 1) conduct planning activities (AEM Tier III) **OR**
- 2) implement (AEM Tier IV) Agricultural BMP Systems.

Planning

Applicants requesting State funding to conduct planning projects must have completed a current AEM Tier I inventory and an AEM Tier II assessment on all participating farms. Planning projects should follow the tiered planning process set forth in the current “AEM Base Program Manual,” as adopted by the State Committee and accessible on the State Committee’s SharePoint site. CNMP updates for regulated farm operations are not eligible for cost share through the Ag Non-Point Source Program. Plan updates for non-regulated farms with CNMPs that are greater than three years old will be eligible for cost share.

Implementation

Applicants requesting State funding for the implementation of eligible Best Management Practice Systems must have completed an AEM Tier 3 plan, which could include a Tier 3A that addresses the resource concern identified for implementation, a Tier 3B Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP), or a Tier 3C Whole Farm Plan (WFP).

The Agricultural Best Management Practice Systems Catalogue shall serve as guidance for eligible Best Management Practice (BMP) System selection. Funds may be used for preventative initiative, remedial initiatives, or both. All BMPs proposed for implementation must meet New York State NRCS Standards and Specifications or demonstrate that a variance has been issued. If no NYS NRCS Standards or Specifications exist, then the practice must be designed to meet nationally recognized standards (*e.g.* American Concrete Institute Standards). All practices implemented must be approved by an individual with appropriate approval authority in accordance with the Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities chart.

Appendix 1 of the application form, Screening Tool for Roofs and Covers for Heavy Use Areas, Barnyards and Feedlots, must be filled out for each applicant requesting State funding for the implementation of a covered barnyard or heavy use area. Roofs and Covers associated with a Waste Storage Facility (NRCS NY – 313 Waste Storage Facility) do not require the completion of Appendix 1 of the application form.

Applicants requesting State funding for the implementation of a Waste Storage Facility (NRCS NY – 313 Waste Storage Facility) that is part of a Waste Storage and Transfer System, including Bedded Pack and Composted Bedded Pack systems, must demonstrate that a CNMP has been completed for the farm(s) prior to the submission of an application pursuant to this RFP. Waste Storage Facilities (NRCS NY – 313 Waste Storage Facility) implemented as a component practice of a Short-Term Waste Collection and Transfer System must demonstrate that one of the following plan requirements have been completed: a combined AEM Tier 3A Farmstead and Nutrient Management Core Plan, a combined AEM Tier 3A Farmstead and Full 590 Plan, or a CNMP. Short-Term Waste Collection and Transfer Systems supported through the AGNPS program must adhere to the guidelines established in the Agricultural Best Management Practice Systems Catalogue. Appendix 2 of the application, the Tier 3A Screening Tool for Agricultural Waste Storage Facility must be filled out to document the existing resource concern and define the proposed project.

When considering applying for a new or relocated bunk silo, anaerobic digester, bedded pack system or covered heavy use area you will need to refer to the respective AGNPS Program policy for a list of components eligible for cost share. **Long term manure storages constructed under animal housing facilities (under barn manure storages) or heavy use areas are strictly prohibited through the AGNPS program.**

BMPs to be implemented on rented property should not be submitted for funding unless there is a written lease for the use of the property for the life span of the BMP (*see* attached BMP Operation &

Maintenance Guidelines, page 16).

Conflict of Interest

If the project application includes eligible participating landowner(s) who are also District employees or District directors or have a business or family relation to a District employee or director, the potential conflict of interest shall be evaluated based on the District or county ethics policy. A person with a potential conflict of interest must disclose the existence of such an interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the Board. The person with a potential conflict of interest must recuse themselves from all discussions regarding the application. A recusal means NOT acting in their official capacity. This is accomplished by leaving the meeting space during any discussions, questioning, commenting, and voting on the issue while operating in their official capacity, whether during a Board meeting or, for employees, while logging hours as District staff. When in a Board meeting setting, the recusal must be reflected in the meeting minutes and shall occur every time the Round 29 AGNPS application is mentioned. Such recusals are intended for discussion and decision making related to a specific project within the Round 29 AGNPS contract.

The Project Sponsor must submit a copy of the official Board Meeting minutes that reflect the process for the selection of the farm(s), disclosure of potential conflicts of interest, and necessary recusals from the authorizing resolution. The names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the Round 29 AGNPS project shall be noted in the meeting minutes. When a recusal is made to avoid a conflict of interest, this shall be noted in the minutes with the name(s), reason(s) for recusal, and times when the person left and returned to the meeting.

2.2 BMP Operation and Maintenance Guidelines

A BMP that is funded by the NYS Agricultural NPS Abatement & Control Program must be maintained and properly operated for the conservation purposes for which the practice was approved. The project sponsor must ensure that active BMPs, at a minimum, be operated and maintained by the Landowner and/or Operator for the lifespan period. For information on BMPs including life spans please refer to the Agricultural Best Management Practice Systems Catalogue. See page 17 of the RFP for the BMP Operation and Maintenance Guidelines.

2.3 Eligible Costs

Eligible expenses include:

- Personal services for contract administration.
- Technical services to implement individual farm-level plans or BMP systems.
- Architectural, engineering, consultant and legal services.
- Plans and specifications, including personal services to conduct individual farm level agricultural nonpoint source abatement and control plans.
- Other direct expenses related to planning and implementation (*e.g.* funding for cultural resource impact determinations for ground disturbing BMPs).
- Best Management Practice System implementation costs.

Proposed Waste Storage and Transfer Systems that include an impermeable cover and flare system for water quality and other conservation benefits (*e.g.*, greenhouse gas mitigation) are eligible through the Agricultural NPS Abatement & Control Program. State assistance payments may not be used to reimburse the cost of the flare and its associated components. These costs will be eligible as landowner

match only.

State assistance payments may not be used to cover the lease or purchase of equipment not directly related to the function of the BMP. If the equipment is directly related to the function of the BMP state assistance payments can be used. Equipment costs may also be an eligible match contribution. It is advisable for applicants to request clarification on the eligibility of specific equipment during the open questions and answers period and all determinations will be added to the Questions and Answers document.

When applying for a planning grant, State assistance payments may be used to cover the costs associated with the development of a Tier 3B CNMP or Tier 3C Whole Farm Plan and associated plan update costs for two additional years.

Costs associated with the update of an existing CNMP may be utilized as landowner or operator match **ONLY when** applying for an Agricultural Waste Storage Facility. All costs associated with the operation and maintenance of BMPs will be the sole responsibility of the landowner and/or operator and cannot be used as a match to State funding. The project sponsor must require that the landowner and/or operator maintain the practice during its expected life span.

2.4 Match Requirements

If the proposal contains no contribution from the owner or operator of agricultural land, then the State may fund up to 75 percent of the total eligible costs for planning **or** BMP implementation. The amount of State funding may be increased by a percentage equal to the percentage of the total eligible costs that are contributed by the landowner or operator provided, however, that in no event shall the amount of State funding exceed 87.5 percent of total eligible costs. The State funded contribution in dollars or percentages cannot increase because of budget changes or variations.

Landowner or operator contributions used to increase the State portion of the project cost may be in the form of cash, or in kind services which are calculated using an assigned cash value. An assigned cash value provided by the landowner or operator must be reasonable and is subject to adjustment by the committee.

If the Project Sponsor will be contributing match, the contribution may be in the form of in-kind services and/or cash (non-state funds). Recommended or actual hourly rates may be used to determine the value of Project Sponsor in-kind services. Funds from the Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control Program will be provided contingent upon the sponsor receiving necessary funds to provide the required match. Sponsor and landowner contributions and expenditures made or incurred prior to the contract start date or after contract completion, as designated by the Department of Agriculture and Markets (Department), may not be utilized as matching funds or reimbursed by the State.

2.5 Round 29 Ag NPS Grant Hourly Rate Recommendation

The following rates were acquired from SWCDs as a result of our inquiry as part of the 2021 annual reports submitted.

The new hourly rates which can be used by SWCDs, in lieu of providing justification for calculating their actual salary, benefit and overhead, to calculate total personnel services costs for Round 29 Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control Grants are as follows:

	Hourly Rate	Overhead	Total
Managerial	\$64	\$5	\$69
Senior Technical*	\$48	\$5	\$53
Technical	\$41	\$5	\$46
Secretarial	\$41	\$5	\$46
SWCD Engineer	\$69	\$5	\$74
NRCS Area Engineer	\$86	\$5	\$91

*10 years of experience or more

In the above figures, the NRCS Area Engineer Rate and the \$5 per hour overhead cannot be paid with State funds but needs to be shown in the Sponsor column under Engineering and Overhead Expenses. The budget form provides a column for the \$5 per hour overhead figures. The remainder of the hourly rate figures for each category can be requested for State funding if there is adequate match in the grant.

Districts may use their actual salary, benefit and overhead figures in lieu of the above set rates. In those cases, full documentation must be provided to obtain payment. In cases where interns, seasonal or part-time employees are used, actual hourly rates will have to be used and justified. If a SWCD Engineer opts to use their actual salary, overhead expenses cannot be used.

These rates, including overhead expenses, can also be used for local agency personnel (NRCS, CCE) as well as private sector consultants. These individuals will also have the option to use and fully justify their own actual rates. Overhead expenses cannot be used for actual rates.

Hourly rates have not been specified for landowners wishing to contribute in-kind match. Districts may name a reasonable hourly rate, based on the work the landowner will be performing. The \$5 per hour overhead cannot be used for landowners.

3. PROPOSAL FORMAT, CONTENTS AND SUBMISSION

3.1 Request for Proposals Timeline

	Deadline
Release Request for Proposals	March 2023
Begin posting Questions and Answers	April 10, 2023
Deadline for submittal of questions	May 22, 2023
Final Questions and Answers Posted	June 2, 2023
Deadline for Proposal Submission	June 26, 2023
Award Announcement	October 2023

3.2 Submission Requirements

Proposals for funding under the Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control Program must be submitted through the **NYS SWCC SharePoint Site by 4:30 p.m. local time, June 26, 2023**.

Applicants are responsible for the timely submission of proposals. *Proposals will not be accepted after the due date and time.* Mailed, delivered, or faxed proposals will not be accepted. If delays or other upload issues are experienced when submitting to SharePoint, proposals may be e-mailed to the Program Manager at Bethany.bzduch@agriculture.ny.gov. A notification e-mail must be sent to the Program

Manager documenting the inability to upload prior to submitting the proposal via e-mail. The Department reserves the right to request paper copies as necessary.

3.3 Questions and Answers

Prospective applicants with questions concerning this RFP should present those questions to:

Bethany Bzduch
New York State Soil & Water Conservation Committee
10 B Airline Drive Albany, NY 12235
(518) 457-3738 (phone)
(518) 457-3412 (fax)
Bethany.bzduch@agriculture.ny.gov

All questions must be submitted in writing to Bethany Bzduch by the deadline indicated in Section 3.1 Request for Proposals Timeline. Applicants should note that all clarifications are to be resolved prior to the submission of a proposal. A list of questions about the RFP, answers to those questions as well as any addenda to the RFP, will be added to the Frequently Asked Questions Document posted on SharePoint along with the electronic version of this RFP and other program attachments. All questions and answers shall be incorporated into the RFP as a formal addendum.

3.4 Proposal Format

Planning Application Packet (Please use forms provided)

For planning (Tier III) proposals, applicants **MUST** submit the following attachments through the SharePoint Site:

- The completed project Application Form*
- Form SW-1: List of Participating Landowners - a list of farms to be addressed by the proposal with applicable information*
- Form SW-2: Budget Form - completed budget form with cost share amounts and source of sponsor and landowner contributions noted, and designation of match as cash (C) or in-kind (IK)*
- Form SW-4: Personnel Worksheet - completed project personnel worksheet*
- SWCD Board Resolution authorizing this project application to the Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control Grants Program
- 8½ x 11 map(s) of the watershed(s). All maps must be legible and must include the following:**
 - Boundary of the watershed
 - Location of the impacted waterbody
 - Location of farm(s) participating in the grant
 - Names of townships within the watershed boundary
- If applying for the Clean Water Plan additional points:
 - Identify the document title, date published, and report availability (online/print) in the application form.
 - Agriculture **MUST** be identified as a source of pollution.

- If applying for the public drinking water protection additional points, the Source Water Assessment map showing farms in the assessment area OR written confirmation (e-mail or letter) from a Department of Health representative indicating that projects are located within a delineated contributing area for a public water supply
- If applying for the DWSP2 Plan additional points, the Drinking Water Source Protection Map showing the farm's location in the delineated area
- Signed Landowner Commitment and Signature form for each participating landowner

Implementation Application Packet (Please use forms provided)

For implementation (Tier IV) proposals, applicants **MUST** submit the following attachments through the Sharepoint Site:

- The completed project Application Form*
 - If applicable, completed Appendix 1: Screening Tool for Roofs and Covers for Heavy Use Areas, Barnyards, and Feedlots
 - If applicable, completed Appendix 2: Ag Waste Storage Screening Tool
- Form SW-1: List of Participating Landowners - a list of farms to be addressed by the proposal with applicable information*
- Form SW-2: Budget Form - completed budget form with cost share amounts and source of sponsor and landowner contributions noted, and designation of match as cash (C) or in-kind (IK)*
- Form SW-3: BMP Implementation List - a list of all BMP Systems and Component Practices for each landowner indicating the type and cost*
- Form SW-4: Personnel Worksheet - completed project personnel worksheet*
- SWCD Board Resolution authorizing this project application to the Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control Grants Program
- 8½ x 11 map(s) of the watershed(s). All maps must be legible and must include the following:**
 - Boundary of the watershed
 - Location of the impacted waterbody
 - Location of farm(s) participating in the grant
 - Names of townships within the watershed boundary
- A topographical layer may be added to each farmstead or field map **OR** a separate 8 ½ x 11 topographical map of each project site may be included. Separate maps must be legible, utilize an appropriate scale, and include the following:**
 - North arrow
 - Project site location(s) **OR** a topographic layer may be added to each farmstead or field map
- Farmstead or field map from the AEM Plan that includes the following: **
 - The proposed project area
 - Flow path direction and distance (in feet) to the impacted watercourse or groundwater recharge area. If a topographic layer has been added the layer should be set to an appropriate level of transparency.

- NYS Cultural Resources Information System Map for practices that are designated as having a Potential Effect or Effect to historic properties.
 - A map will not be required for practices that have a No Effect designation.
- If applying for the Clean Water Plan additional points:
 - Identify the document title, date published, and report availability (online/print) in the application form.
 - Agriculture **MUST** be identified as a source of pollution.
- If applying for the public drinking water protection additional points, the Source Water Assessment map showing farms in the assessment area OR written confirmation (e-mail or letter) from a Department of Health representative indicating that projects are located within a delineated contributing area for a public water supply.
- If applying for the DWSP2 Plan additional points, the Drinking Water Source Protection Map showing the farm's location in the delineated area.
- If applying for the livestock access control and/or conservation buffer points, the SW3 BMP Implementation list is included with the appropriate BMP System and units listed for each Landowner.
 - **ALL** Landowners included in the application must commit to implementing livestock access control and/or conservation buffers.
- Signed Landowner Commitment and Signature form for each participating landowner

THE SWCD MANAGER MUST FILL OUT AND SIGN THE CHECKLIST WITH EACH APPLICATION SUBMISSION.

*** Items marked with an asterisk are essential required elements of the proposal.** Failure to provide the item(s) by the deadline for proposal submission will constitute an incomplete proposal and the application will not be considered for funding.

****Items marked with a double asterisk are required elements that if determined to be missing the applicant will be notified by email and provided 5 business days to submit the missing item(s).** Failure to provide the item(s) by the designated deadline will constitute an incomplete proposal and the application will not be considered for funding. If the item(s) are received by the designated deadline the proposal will be considered for funding and receive a 5 point reduction penalty from the final aggregated score. *Applications that received a 5 point penalty are not eligible to receive AGNPS preference points.*

3.5 Deliverables

Deliverables are the anticipated end-product of the proposal. The primary deliverables for this program will be **ONE** of the following: plans (Tier III) **OR** the implementation of BMP Systems (Tier IV) to control and/or prevent agricultural nonpoint source pollution.

3.6 Proposed Scope and Budget

A Participating Landowners Form (SW-1), Project Budget Form (SW-2) and Key Personnel Worksheet (SW-4) must be completed for each project submitted. A BMP implementation list (SW-3) must be completed for each implementation (Tier IV) project submitted. These forms should indicate State assistance payments requested by expenditure category, as well as the amount, type (cash or in-kind) and source (SWCD, landowner, EQIP) of the Project Sponsor's and landowner's matching contribution. Please refer to the "Match Requirements" section of this RFP for additional information.

The Project Sponsor may include a “Contingency Account” in the proposed budget to cover unanticipated cost overruns. The proposed budget may include up to 10 percent of the BMP Implementation expenditures. Use of contingency funds for eligible BMP Systems, will require a sponsor and/or landowner contribution that is the same as the match percentages of the BMP(s). The match can be in the form of cash or in-kind services. When implementing best management practices in accordance with the NYS SWCC Soil Health Policy utilizing flat rates, projects will NOT be eligible for contingency funds. The Budget Form (SW-2) will NOT automatically calculate the “Contingency Account”. The Project Sponsor will be responsible for manually entering this amount into the form. The Project Sponsor must submit a formal request to use contingency funds to the appropriate Associate Environmental Analyst for review and approval. The request will then be forwarded to the Ag NPS Program Manager for final approval.

3.7 Status of Source Water Assessment Program Maps/Susceptibility Summary Analysis

Source Water Assessment Program reports were mailed to each Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) in February 2005 by the NYS Department of Health, Bureau of Water Supply Protection. The reports may be useful to SWCD program activities. As appropriate, SWCDs are encouraged to include portions of these reports as supporting documentation for Agricultural NPS Abatement and Control Program proposals. Portions of these reports may be used to document the potential to receive additional points for proposals that address sources of public drinking water. If these reports are not available, a determination can be made by a representative from the Department of Health. Location determination requests or questions regarding source water protection and public water supplies can be addressed to **Ashley Inzerillo, Source Protection Section, Bureau of Water Supply Protection at 518-402-7650 or ashley.inzerillo@health.ny.gov**.

3.8 Status of WI/PWL Reports

To access information on Waterbody Inventory/Priority Waterbodies List, please visit the online map tool - NYS DEC InfoLocator: <https://gisservices.dec.ny.gov/gis/dil/>. To view the WI/PWL factsheets, select ‘Environmental Monitoring’ in the left column and select the Waterbody Inventory/Priority Waterbodies List. Zoom in until the waterbodies appear on the map. Locate the waterbody of interest and click on the segment or lake. A hyperlink will appear that will take you to the Fact Sheet.

4. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND METHOD OF AWARD

4.1 Funding Criteria

Scoring is based on the Proposal Rating Sheet. Evaluators will record proposal scores in each of the four scoring categories. The scores of the evaluators will be aggregated and preference (up to 5 points) or penalty points will be assessed on the aggregated score to make up proposal’s grand total score. All proposals will then be ranked by their grand total score from highest to lowest to make up the Ranked List for awards. The maximum available aggregated score is 300 points based on six evaluators awarding a maximum score of 50 points each. Proposals that receive a score of less than 150 or 50% of the maximum available aggregated score, before preference points are assigned, will not be considered for funding. With all preference points earned (see below) the maximum grand total score is 305.

The State Committee shall give preference to proposals located within a watershed or subwatershed of a priority waterbody as identified by the Commissioner of Environmental Conservation, pursuant to Section 17-1407 of the Environmental Conservation Law. [DEC defines such priority waterbodies to include the Priority Waterbodies List (PWL) for surface water and for groundwater - unconsolidated aquifers (including primary, principal and other aquifer areas, as illustrated on a series of

five maps entitled, “Potential Yields of Wells in Unconsolidated Aquifers in Upstate New York” and on other more detailed aquifer maps published by the U.S. Geological Survey), and wellhead protection areas (determined by municipalities, county agencies and regional planning agencies consistent with the New York State Wellhead Protection Program).]

The State Committee shall also give preference to projects proposed to promote participation in or further the priorities of the AEM program and the specific five-year AEM County Strategies (Agriculture & Markets Law Article 11-a).

Consideration will be given to the following factors in rating proposals:

1. Project clearly addresses identified need or opportunity
2. Project supports other conservation efforts
3. Adequate scope of work
4. Project is cost effective

All proposals must include sufficient information to allow the above factors to be evaluated. The State Committee reserves the right to conduct site reviews of the proposed project areas as part of the selection process.

All eligible proposals will be graded according to the stated criteria and ranked in order of overall score from highest to lowest. The Advisory Members will recommend projects for funding to the full State Committee. The voting members of the State Committee, through adoption of a written resolution, will authorize funding for projects based on the recommendations of the advisory members until the scoring threshold has been reached or available funds are exhausted. Consideration will be given to any provisions governing or restricting the use of the available funds. The resolution shall be made available as part of the SWCC official meeting minutes. The State Committee shall notify in writing those districts selected for funding.

4.2 Preference Points

Preference Points will be assessed by the Program Manager based on the submission of the required information as defined in the Request for Proposals. If the required information for preference point consideration is not received, the proposer will not be notified, and bonus points will not be assessed. Applications that receive a 5-point penalty will not be eligible to receive preference points.

- The State Committee shall give two (2) additional points to proposals that meet **ONE** of the following criteria. The points will be awarded to the aggregated score:
 - Address waterbodies or watersheds with a Clean Water Plan (TMDL or Nine Element (9E) plan), where an identified source of the impairment is agriculture, and the project will contribute to restoration of water quality
 - To qualify for these preference points, projects must be located within the watershed of the waterbody with an active TMDL or be located within the watershed addressed by a 9E Watershed Plan. The document title, date published, and report availability (on-line/print) must be identified in the application. Agriculture **MUST** be identified as a source of pollution in the plan in order to qualify for additional points.
 - Address a source of public drinking water as identified by the NYS Department of Health

- If a District is seeking to apply for the public drinking water protection preference points, a Source Water Assessment Map showing farms in the assessment area **OR** written confirmation (e-mail or letter) from a Department of Health representative indicating that projects are located within a delineated contributing area for a public water supply must be submitted.
 - Address a community with an active Drinking Water Source Protection Program (DWSP2) Plan.
 - If a District is seeking to apply for the DWSP2 points, the Drinking Water Source Protection Map showing the farm's location within the delineated area must be submitted. Additionally, the DWSP2 Plan must be accepted by the State and updated within the past 5 years.
- The State Committee shall give additional points to projects proposing to exclude livestock from watercourses and/or implement conservation buffers on all participating farms in the proposal. Points will be awarded on a graduated scale according to the following*:
 - Access Control, NRCS Standard 472 = 1 Point awarded to the aggregate proposal score
 - Access Control + Herbaceous Buffer, NRCS Standard 390 = 2 Points to the aggregated score
 - Access Control + Forest Buffer, NRCS Standard 391 = 3 Points to the aggregated score

* To receive conservation buffer points on cropland and/or pasture, where access control of livestock is not applicable, 2 points will be added to the final aggregated score for implementing Herbaceous Buffers, NRCS Standard 390 on all participating farms

* To receive conservation buffer points on cropland and/or pasture, where access control of livestock is not applicable, 3 points will be added to the final aggregated score for implementing Forest Buffers, NRCS Standard 391 on all participating farms

* For the purpose of awarding preference points, if all farms commit to implement a range of eligible conservation buffer systems but not all commit to the highest level of conservation buffers, the points will be awarded based on the buffer system with the fewest amount of points available. *For example, if there are four farms on the proposal and two commit to implement Herbaceous Buffers, NRCS Standard 390 and two farms commit to implement Forest Buffers, NRCS Standard 391, then 1 point will be added to the final aggregated score. For another example, if there are four farms on the proposal and three commit to implement Forest Buffers, NRCS Standard 391, and one farm does not commit to install any of the above listed practice systems, then no preference points will be added to the final aggregated score.*

5. AWARDS

Sponsors whose proposals are selected for funding will be notified as soon as possible. Selected proposals must comply with all applicable federal, State, and local laws and rules and regulations for funding to be awarded. Evidence of such compliance may be required.

Implementation proposals which are selected for funding may be subject to further review by the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) prior to development of a contract. The State Committee reserves the right to request such additional information from sponsors as is necessary to allow the OPRHP to make a determination regarding the impact of a project.

5.1 Debriefing of Non-Awardees

Following the announcement of the applicants awarded funding agreements under this RFP, unsuccessful applicants may request a debriefing from the Department's Program Manager no later than fifteen (15) days from the date of the non-award notification. This briefing will be limited to a discussion of the failed aspects of the subject application. To request a review of an unsuccessful application, contact Bethany Bzduch, AgNPS Program Manager via e-mail at bethany.bzduch@agriculture.ny.gov.

6. CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 Contracts

Once an application has been selected for funding, the State Committee will notify the sponsor of the need to provide information necessary to complete the contract.

If the State Committee and the Department are unsuccessful in negotiating a contract which will achieve the deliverables in a manner consistent with the proposal as approved by the State Committee, the RFP, and any applicable laws or regulations, the Committee reserves the right to rescind its approval of the proposal for funding and instead award the funding to other eligible unfunded project proposals.

For planning projects, the standard term will be three years. The standard term for implementation projects will be four years. The State Committee reserves the right to modify the standard contract term for planning and/or implementation projects. The contract term will be provided to each awardee in the Plan of Work Memo.

Sub-contracts

Any subcontract utilized by the SWCD shall be in writing and shall clearly describe the goods or services to be provided and the total cost of such goods or services. Subcontracts for services shall separately state the rate of compensation on a per-hour or per-day basis.

For implementation projects, the SWCD must have an executed funding agreement with each participating landowner prior to submitting claims for payment for implementation funds under this Agreement. The landowner must acknowledge and agree that they will be responsible for the total BMP implementation costs and that all state assistance payments will be made on a reimbursement basis. The funding agreement must also state that all cost overruns will be the responsibility of the landowner. The amount and source of all landowner contributions must be identified, and a commitment of match for contingency funds must be included. If the source of the landowner contribution originates from a Federal or local program the amount and specific source should be identified. The landowner must also acknowledge and agree that the total amount of state assistance payments and matching funds received from Federal or local sources cannot exceed 100% of the final project costs and that state assistance payments may be reduced accordingly.

For all subcontracts with a farm landowner and/or operator involving the purchase of goods and/or services for BMP implementation projects, the Contractor shall require the landowner and/or operator to obtain 3 written quotes for all purchases over \$20,000. The Contractor shall require the landowner and/or operator to document all quotes and justify in writing any instances where purchases were not made from the lowest responsible bidder. Additionally, the Contractor shall notify the Department if either the farm landowner or the Contractor intends to perform any of the BMP Implementation Work when such work is valued at \$20,000 or more. The Contractor shall retain documentation of all purchases in a manner that is readily available for review if requested by the Department. For all other subcontracts the Contractor shall follow its own procurement policies.

6.2 Payment

Payments to the project sponsor cannot be made until the contract is fully executed. A minimum of 10 percent of the State assistance payment will be withheld pending satisfactory completion of the contract.

Payment for invoices submitted by the Contractor (project sponsor) shall only be rendered electronically unless payment by paper check is expressly authorized by the Commissioner, in the Commissioner's sole discretion, due to extenuating circumstances. Such electronic payment shall be made in accordance with ordinary State procedures and practices. The Contractor (project sponsor) shall comply with the Comptroller of the State of New York's procedures to authorize electronic payments. Contractor (project sponsor) acknowledges that it will not receive payment on any invoices submitted under this Agreement if it does not comply with the Comptroller of the State of New York's electronic payment procedures, except where the Commissioner has expressly authorized payment by paper check as set forth above.

Monies received pursuant to the contract shall be deposited by the Contractor (project sponsor) in a separate interest-bearing account. Prior to the final payment, the Contractor (project sponsor) must submit to the Department a statement of interest earned during the term of this Agreement. The final payment will be offset by the amount of any interest earned.

6.3 Reporting Requirements

State Committee staff will monitor the progress of each funded project.

The State Committee reserves the right to modify the reporting requirements during the course of the project. At a minimum, progress reports shall be filed with the Committee when requesting payments and/or when submitting a contract amendment. Additional progress reports may be requested by State Committee staff as necessary. In addition, an original comprehensive final report will be required within sixty (60) days following completion of the project.

The final report shall include a final report and checklist including a description of the work completed and problems encountered (reviewed and signed by SWCC staff); final budget report detailing income and expenditures; final SW forms 1, 3, and 4 (including SWCD timesheets); and Landowner Summary which includes a Project Expenditure Summary form, invoices, proofs of payment, and landowner time logs, Procurement Record form, Consultant Engineer's Certification form, and photographs.; and such other information as the State Committee may deem necessary.

The State Committee reserves the right to conduct a follow-up evaluation of funded projects in order to determine long-term impacts.

The Department and Comptroller's Office reserves the right to audit the Project Sponsor's books and records relating to the performance of the project during and up to six (6) years after the completion of the project.

6.4 NYS Master Contract

New York State has developed a standard "Master Contract" containing standard clauses required in all State Contracts. The Master Contract will be executed for all projects awarded under the Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control Grant Program, and applicants are responsible for complying with the terms and conditions contained therein.

6.5 Liability

The State will not be held liable for any costs incurred by any District for work performed in the preparation of and production of a proposal, or for any work performed prior to the formal execution of a contract.

6.6 Freedom of Information

All proposals submitted and all related contracts and reports may be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Law.

6.7 Other Considerations

The State Committee reserves the right to:

- 1) Modify proposal submission requirements as deemed necessary with appropriate written notice to all potential applicants.
- 2) Reject any or all proposals received in response to this RFP.
- 3) Withdraw the RFP at any time, at the State Committee's sole discretion.
- 4) Make an award under the RFP in whole or part.
- 5) Disqualify any applicant whose conduct and/or proposal fails to conform to the requirements of the RFP.
- 6) Seek clarifications and revisions of proposals.
- 7) Amend the RFP specifications prior to the deadline for proposals to correct errors or oversights, or to supply additional information, as it becomes available and with appropriate written notice to all potential applicants by posting amendments on the [Department's website](#).
- 8) Direct applicants to submit proposal modifications addressing subsequent RFP amendments prior to the deadline for proposals.
- 9) Change any of the scheduled dates.
- 10) Eliminate any mandatory, non-material specifications with which all applicants cannot comply.
- 11) Waive any requirements that are not material.
- 12) Require clarification at any time during the grant process and/or require correction of arithmetic or other apparent errors for the purpose of assuring a full and complete understanding of an applicant's proposal and/or to determine an applicant's compliance with the requirements of the RFP.
- 13) Waive or modify minor irregularities in proposals received after prior notification to the applicant.
- 14) Award more than one funding agreement to the same successful applicant resulting from this RFP.
- 15) Negotiate with successful applicants any matter within the scope of the RFP in the best interests of the State.
- 16) Make all final decisions with respect to the amount of State funding and the timing of payments to be provided to an applicant.

All eligible proposals submitted in response to this RFP will become the property of the New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee.

BMP Operations and Maintenance Guidelines

1. A BMP that is funded by the NYS Agricultural NPS Abatement & Control Program must be maintained and properly operated for the conservation purposes for which the practice was approved. BMPs must, at a minimum, be maintained by the Landowner and/or Operator for the lifespan period in years set forth below.
2. In the event a Landowner and/or Operator modifies or ceases his/her enterprise and a BMP becomes idle but remains intact, the BMP should be considered to be maintained and the BMP life span shall include the idle period.
3. Under special circumstances such as financial or management difficulties, the SWCD Board of Directors may recommend that the Landowner and/or Operator be exempt from the requirement to maintain and operate the BMP(s).
4. Under the following conditions, these guidelines should not apply if the SWCD determines that:
 - The Landowner's and/or Operator's Conservation Plan no longer requires operation and maintenance of the BMP.
 - Failure to operate and maintain the BMP was because of conditions beyond the Landowner's and/or Operator's control or the Landowner involuntarily loses control of the land.
 - The BMP was discontinued to perform another BMP that provides comparable water quality benefits.
5. The following list of BMP life spans are for practices implemented under the New York State Agricultural NPS Abatement & Control Grant Program.

Access Control System (10)	Pathogen Management System (10)
Agrichemical Handling and Storage System (10)	Petroleum and Oil Products Storage System (10)
Composting System – Animal (10)	Prescribed Rotational Grazing System (10)
Erosion Control – Structural System (10)	Process Wash Water Management System (10)
Feed Management System (1)	Riparian Buffer Systems (10)
Integrated Pest Management System <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPM Plan (1) • Various Application Equipment (up to 10) 	Silage Leachate Control and Treatment (10)
Irrigation Water Management System (1)	Soil Conservation Systems – Cultural (1-5)
Livestock Heavy Use Area Runoff Management System (10)	Stream Corridor and Shoreline Management System (10)
Manure and Agricultural Waste Treatment System (10)	Waste Storage and Transfer System (10)
Nutrient Management – Cultural (1)	

For more information on BMPs and their associated life spans, please refer to the Agricultural Best Management Practice Systems Catalogue and the NRCS Electronics Field Office Technical Guide (E-FOTG).

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ROUND 29

PROPOSAL RATING SHEET

Preference Points – awarded to the aggregate score (Maximum of 5 points)	Available Points
The State Committee shall give two (2) additional points to proposals that meet ONE of the following criteria. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address waterbodies or watersheds with a Clean Water Plan (TMDL or Nine Element (9E) plan), where an identified source of the impairment is agriculture, and the project will contribute to restoration of water quality. • Address sources of public drinking water as identified by the NYS Department of Health. • Address a community with an active Drinking Water Source Protection Plan 	2
The State Committee shall give additional points to projects proposing to exclude livestock (access control) from watercourses and/or implement conservation buffers on all participating farms in the proposal. Points will be awarded on a graduated scale according to the following ¹ :	1
Access Control, NRCS Standard 472	1
Access Control + Herbaceous Buffer, NRCS Standard 390 OR Herbaceous Buffers, NRCS Standard 390 on cropland and/or pasture where livestock access is not applicable	2
Access Control + Forest Buffer, NRCS Standard 391 OR Forest Buffers, NRCS Standard 391 on cropland and/or pasture where livestock access is not applicable	3

¹ For the purpose of awarding preference points, if all farms commit to implement a range of eligible conservation buffer systems but not all commit to the highest level of conservation buffers, the points will be awarded based on the buffer system with the fewest points available.

For example, if there are four farms on the proposal and two farms commit to implement Herbaceous Buffers, NRCS Standard 390 and two farms commit to implement Forest Buffers, NRCS Standard 391, then one point will be awarded to the final aggregated score. For another example, if there are four farms on the proposal and three farms commit to implement Forest Buffers, NRCS Standard 391, and one farm does not commit to install any of the above listed practice systems, then no additional points will be awarded to the final aggregated score

1. Project Clearly Addresses Identified Need or Opportunity (Maximum Score = 25 points)	Available Points per Category
Watershed analysis/assessment/planning has already been conducted to document the pollutants of concern and likely nonpoint sources of that pollution in the watershed.	Proposal may receive up to 10 points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Application clearly describes the watershed analysis that has been conducted to document pollutants of concern (i.e. PWL, 303(d) List of Impaired Waters Requiring a TMDL Clean Water Plan, SWAP, Drinking Water Source Protection Plan, Harmful Algal Bloom Action Plan, watershed based management plan, local study, etc.) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Agriculture has been identified as a potential source of pollution/impairment through documented watershed analysis. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If there are no documented impairments, the environmental risk and opportunity to prevent water quality degradation is explained and well documented. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The AEM priority planning unit is summarized and the project will address the water quality and/or aquatic habitat problem(s) described. 	
Project addresses a significant identified need or opportunity.	Proposal may receive up to 15 points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The SWCD has rated this proposal as one of their highest priorities (project ID). 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Project includes farms that have not previously received cost share assistance through the program. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Project is located within a watershed or subwatershed of a priority waterbody as identified by the Commissioner of Environmental Conservation - [DEC defines such priority waterbodies to include the Priority Waterbodies List (PWL) for surface water and for groundwater - unconsolidated aquifers (including primary, principal and other aquifer areas, as illustrated on a series of five maps entitled, "Potential Yields of Wells in Unconsolidated Aquifers in Upstate New York" and on other more detailed aquifer maps published by the U.S. Geological Survey), and wellhead protection areas (determined by municipalities, county agencies and regional planning agencies consistent with the New York State Wellhead Protection Program).] 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Project proximity to the water resource being addressed suggests close relationship between impairment of water resource and potential pollutant source. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ BMP selection is based on an AEM Strategic Plan, a watershed analysis, an AEM Tier 2 environmental risk assessment and a Tier 3 Conservation Plan for the agricultural pollutant source(s) being addressed by the application 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Selected BMPs are needed to address preventative pollution concerns or compliance issues and the need is well documented. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Selected BMPs are needed to address an executed consent order for compliance with the State CAFO Permit. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Plans to be prepared will advance BMP System implementation and adoption 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Maps, photos, and other supporting documents have been used to illustrate the problem described in the proposal narrative. 	

○

2. Project will support other conservation efforts (Maximum Score = 5 points)	Available Points per Category
Evidence that the proposed project will support other conservation efforts is documented	Proposal may receive up to 5 points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A multi-county approach is utilized if the watershed encompasses more than one county, and all counties have agreed to participate 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Project will promote participation in or further the priorities of the AEM program. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Project addresses goals and objectives outlined in a watershed-based management plan and/or County AEM Strategy. Project is consistent with, or in cooperation with, other watershed planning and/or implementation activities in the project area or is part of a phased effort to address agricultural nonpoint sources in the watershed. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A Watershed Agricultural Advisory Committee has been established and the project meets the goals of the committee. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Implementation projects proposed for funding are located on agricultural lands that have been permanently protected from conversion to non-farm development by perpetual conservation easements. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The project will encourage the adoption of additional BMPs in the watershed beyond what the grant will be funding. For example, a BMP that demonstrates a practice not widely used in an area or demonstrates new or innovative technology could encourage replication on nearby farms. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Project will assist in meeting federal and other state environmental conservation programs and program requirements/objectives (e.g. CWA, SDWA, CZARA, Farm Bill, CREP, SWAP, CRF, AEM, SWBP, CLCPA, CAC Scoping Plan, etc.) 	

3. Adequate Scope of Work (Maximum Score = 10 points)	Available Points per Category
The project scope and feasibility of the project is clearly demonstrated	Proposal may receive up to 10 points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Project proposal is comprehensive, coordinated and integrated and uses an interdisciplinary team of public and/or private sector professionals to maximize the ability to develop Tier 3 plans or engineer and implement Tier IV BMPs. Local AEM Stakeholders have a role in developing and carrying out this project. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Project deliverables are clearly defined and consistent with program objectives. Proposal describes what will be done, how the project will be done, who will do it and when it will be done. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Project proposal includes engineering/technical services commensurate with BMP deliverables 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The shovel-readiness of the project is described 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The application clearly defines the capacity of the District to complete proposed activities. Sponsor has demonstrated the ability to fulfill program reporting requirements. Sponsor has no past due (six months past contract expiration date) final close out reports. 	

4. Project is Cost Effective (Maximum Score = 10 points)	Available Points per Category
Project Budget Development and Evidence of Match Contribution is documented	Proposal may receive up to 4 points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Estimated costs for plan development or BMP Systems are appropriate and reflect thorough budget development 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Estimated personnel work hours, for administrative or technical/engineering services are reasonable for the plans to be prepared or BMPs to be implemented and reflect an appropriate percentage of the total project cost. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Landowner provides a match in cash or in-kind services to State funds requested 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The project leverages additional funding (e.g. District/Local, EQIP, CREP, CRP, EPA 319, etc.), especially if requesting a substantial amount of State grant funds. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For implementation projects at Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs), landowner provides a contribution significantly greater than that required by law. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For BMP implementation projects intended to prevent pollution from farm expansion, landowner provides a contribution significantly greater than that required by the program. 	
The cost effectiveness of the project is demonstrated	Proposal may receive up to 6 points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Plans to be prepared or BMP systems to be implemented are cost effective relative to the expected water quality benefit. Projects will have an impact on other resources (soil, air, plants, animals, humans, and energy) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Project proposes to implement agronomic, and/or vegetative BMPs that have a demonstrated water quality benefit. 	

NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee – Soil and Water Conservation Resource Mapping Tool

<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/94a4216a6f8d45dfb3cf4c60ef391ff6/>

This web service map can be used to search and identify HUC 8 and HUC 12 watersheds and other commonly utilized resources. The following layers are included in the tool:

- **NYS Wetlands:** Includes **1.** NYSDEC regulated freshwater wetlands that are currently mapped under the state's Freshwater Wetlands Act (outside the Adirondack Park). **2.** NYSDEC Regulated Tidal wetlands, Hudson River from the Troy Dam south to the southern tip of Staten Island, and along the entire shoreline of Long Island, including the shorelines of Gardiners Island, Shelter Island and Fishers Island. **3.** Adirondack Park Freshwater Wetland maps promulgated for Clinton, Essex, Lewis, Oneida, and Warren Counties inside the Adirondack Park.
- **NYS Karst:** USGS Carbonate Bedrock symbolized by rock type.
- **NYS Ag Districts:** Geographic boundaries for lands that are under the protection of NYS Agricultural District Law, administered by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets.
- **Draft Disadvantaged Communities:** Identifies areas throughout NYS that meet the draft definition of disadvantaged community, as voted on by the Climate Justice Working Group.
- **NRCS Urban Areas:** As defined by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.
- **Electric Power:** **1.** This feature class/shapefile represents electric power, high voltage, transmission lines. **2.** NYS Substation locations. As more data becomes available, 3-phase line locations will be uploaded to this tool.
- **NYS Hydrology:** NYSDECs priority waterbody list including **1.** Lakes **2.** Estuaries **3.** Streams and **4.** Shorelines.
- **HUC8 & HUC12 Watersheds:** HUC reference layers for both HUC8 and HUC12s. This is the most up-to-date layer from USGS. Note- HUC12 are being updated across the US including NY. It may take time to update and cross reference historical HUCs, please utilize this tool for grant related work. Use the 'search for HUC12' bar in the upper right hand corner to verify or search for specific HUC12s.
- **Other NYS Reference Layers:** NYS Streets, State, county and town boundaries

Disclaimer: This tool may not show all natural resources which are regulated by other agencies, including but not limited to NYSDEC, NYSDOT, and NYSDOH. NYSDAM and SWCC do not recommend utilizing this tool for regulatory or legal purposes. Always verify whether a permit is needed or not with the proper regulatory authority.