NEW YORK STATE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND MARKETS
AND SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

RFP0389 - REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Climate Resilient Farming Program

Round 9

Timetable of Key Events:

EVENT	DATE
Application Period Begins	September 2025
Questions and Answers Period Ends	October 17, 2025
Application Deadline	November 17, 2025
Awards Announced	March 2026

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I. GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

1. Introduction

The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (Department) and the New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee (State Committee) invite New York State Soil and Water Conservation Districts to submit proposals for funding under the Climate Resilient Farming (CRF) Program. Funds are available for projects that mitigate the impact of agriculture on climate change and enhance on-farm adaptation and resiliency to projected climate conditions. Applications must be for **ONE** of the following:

- **Track 1:** Livestock Management: Alternative Waste Management and Precision Feed Management
- **Track 2:** Adaptation and Resiliency
- **Track 3:** Healthy Soils NY (Systems and BMPs that support soil health and agroforestry)
- **Track 4**: Agricultural Forest Management

Project proposals must have originated through the Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) framework. Cost share funds will be provided to Soil and Water Conservation Districts for the implementation of Best Management Practice (BMP) Systems on farms that are participating in the AEM Program. Funding for this program is from the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 State Fiscal Year Environmental Protection Fund (EPF), within the "Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation" account (State Funds). Funding may also become available through the Clean Water, Clean Air, and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act of 2022 (NY ECL, Article 58).

2. Proposal Submission Requirements

Proposals for funding under the CRF Program must conform to the format provided in Section IV of this Request for Proposal (RFP).

PROPOSALS MUST BE SUBMITTED by a NYS Soil and Water Conservation District via the State Committee's SharePoint site by 5:00 p.m. local time on November 17, 2025, to be considered for funding. Proposals received after the scheduled date and time will not be accepted.

Applicants, and not computers or servers, are responsible for the timely submission of proposals. Mailed, delivered or faxed proposals will not be accepted. **If delays or other upload issues are experienced when submitting to SharePoint, proposals may be emailed to the Program Manager at Jennifer.clifford@agriculture.ny.gov.** A notification email must be sent to the Program Manager documenting the inability to upload to SharePoint prior to submitting the application via email. The Department reserves the right to request paper copies as necessary.

3. Questions and Answers

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

Jennifer Clifford
Climate Resilient Farming Program Manager
NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets
10B Airline Drive
Albany, NY 12235
Jennifer.clifford@agriculture.ny.gov

All questions must be submitted to Jennifer Clifford in writing by October 17, 2025. 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, and any addenda to the RFP, will be added to the Questions and Answers document posted on the Department website and the State Committee's SharePoint site along with the electronic version of this RFP and other program attachments. A complete Questions and Answers document will be posted no later than October 31, 2025. All questions and answers shall be incorporated into the RFP as a formal addendum.

4. Proposal Timeline

RFP Release:	**September 2025**
Questions Submittal Due Date:	**October 17, 2025**
Questions and Answers Final Posting:	**October 31, 2025**
Proposal Due Date:	**November 17, 2025**
Awards Announced:	**March 2026** *(tentative award date)*

5. Background and Goal of the Climate Resilient Farming Program

Led by the State Committee, in coordination with the Department, the goal of the CRF Program is to reduce the impact of agriculture on climate change (i.e., mitigation) and to increase the resiliency of New York State farms in the face of a changing climate (i.e., adaptation).

Preference will be given to projects that can demonstrate strong potential in mitigation and adaptation.

Mitigation

Estimates of annual greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from agriculture (apart from agricultural energy use, which is classified differently) in New York State are 21 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent on a 20-year timescale[1]. Livestock is responsible for roughly 92% of the emissions and emissions from soils are 8%. This represents a major opportunity to reduce emissions. For example, transitioning from

[1] New York State Climate Action Council. 2022. "New York State Climate Action Council Scoping Plan." Climate.ny.gov/ScopingPlan

open liquid manure storage systems to manure storage systems with covers and flares would allow methane (CH_4), a gas with 84 times the global warming potential[2] of carbon dioxide (CO_2 on a 20-year timescale), to be captured and destroyed. Soil health practices can sequester carbon from the atmosphere as soil organic matter and allow for more efficient use of nitrogen by crops, thereby reducing nitrous oxide (N_2O) emissions from soils (N_2O has 264 times the global warming potential of CO_2 on a 20-year timescale).

Adaptation

Climate projections for New York State include increased summer and winter temperatures, increased overall precipitation, increased intense precipitation events, and more instances of short duration summer droughts. New York farms will likely face more frequent dry periods in the summer as well as more frequent and severe flood events — possibly in the same season. Enhanced water management systems and soil health efforts have the potential to reduce the impacts of climate change on farms by preparing farms for these predicted changes. Water control structures, streambank stabilization, stormwater management, and erosion control BMP systems all address flood and drought issues experienced on-farm. Soil health practices can increase water-holding capacity of soils improving their resilience to flood and drought. Conservation irrigation systems can improve efficiency in managing the water to crops. This program intends to capitalize on the opportunities to mitigate agriculture's GHG emissions while strengthening the resiliency of New York State's farms in preparation for a changing climate.

6. Available Funding

Available funding will be assigned by Track as follows:

Track	Funding Available
Track 1: Livestock Management: Alternative Waste Management & Precision Feed Management	$10,000,000
Track 2: Adaptation & Resiliency	$4,000,000
Track 3: Healthy Soils NY (Systems & BMPs that support soil health and agroforestry);	$8,000,000
Track 4: Agricultural Forestry Management (carbon sequestration)	$2,000,000
Total Available Funding	**$24,000,000**

[2] IPCC report. 2014. Fifth Assessment Report (AR5), https://www.ipcc.ch/assessment-report/ar5/

Reallocation of Funds

Within each Track, available funds will be awarded to eligible projects in ranked order. Any remaining funds from each Track will be pooled and redistributed based on the formula below. Those funds will then be awarded to the next eligible projects in ranked order that can be fully funded. Funds will continue to be reallocated until all funding has been awarded. Partial awards may be offered after reallocation if remaining funds are not enough to fully fund the next eligible project(s) in ranked order. CRF Program funds returned from previous rounds may also be used to fund projects that would otherwise be offered a partial award.

Any remaining funds from Tracks where all eligible projects have been fully funded will be redistributed to Tracks with unfunded projects using the formulas below.

1) Where **three** Tracks remain with unfunded projects:

   Original Track Percentage / (Original Track Percentage Track "#" + Original Track Percentage Track "##" + Original Track Percentage Track "###").

   FOR EXAMPLE: If Track 1 has $2,000,000 remaining after all eligible projects have been fully funded, then the remaining $2,000,000 would be reallocated as follows:

   Track 2: $ 580,000.00 (i.e., 29%);
   Track 3: $1,140,000.00 (i.e., 57%); and
   Track 4: $ 280,000.00 (i.e., 14%).

2) Where **two** Tracks remain with unfunded projects:

   Original Track Percentage / (Original Track Percentage Track "#" + Original Track Percentage Track "##").

If all eligible projects are funded such that only one Track remains with unfunded projects, any leftover funds will be reallocated to the remaining Track.

II. ELIGIBILITY

1. Applicant Eligibility

Proposals for funding will be accepted from NYS Soil and Water Conservation Districts, or a group of Districts acting jointly. Groups of Districts acting jointly shall submit one application with one District assuming "Project Sponsor" status. The Project Sponsor will execute the grant award agreement and assume responsibility for the timely completion of the project and all required reports.

Proposals may be for multiple projects and/or on multiple farm operations but must be for one Track only. A District may submit more than one application, including separate applications for multiple Tracks on the same farm operation.

Note: Some Tracks have overlapping eligible systems. Applicants must choose the most appropriate Track for their proposal based on the overall goals and outcomes of the proposed project.

The County Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Directors has sole authority to prioritize and select the application(s) and associated farm project(s) submitted for competitive ranking within a given CRF Program round according to the AEM process and program rules. A Board Resolution authorizing the District's proposal for funding through the CRF Program must be voted upon, approved, and signed during a board meeting with a quorum, pursuant to Open Meetings Law. All proposals must include the Board Resolution authorizing the proposal as a part of the complete application (see Section IV, Proposal Format).

A "farm operation" shall be as defined in section 301(11) of the New York Agriculture and Markets Law, which is "the land and on-farm buildings, equipment, manure processing and handling facilities, and practices which contribute to the production, preparation and marketing of crops, livestock, and livestock products as a commercial enterprise…." For the purposes of this program, a "farm operation" shall also include urban agriculture, which is the cultivation, processing, and distribution of agricultural products in urban and suburban areas. Community gardens, rooftop farms, hydroponic, aeroponic, and aquaponic facilities, and vertical production are all examples of urban agriculture.

Rented Land - If BMPs are proposed to be implemented on rented property the farm operator must have a written lease agreement for the use of the property that extends for the life span of the proposed practices.

2. New Participant and Beginning Farmer Benefit

The State Committee and the Department are committed to supporting diversity and inclusion in agriculture. The State Committee and the Department encourage Districts to increase program outreach and encourage new participants or beginning farmers to partner with Districts and participate in the CRF Program. Increasing outreach will increase farmer awareness of the CRF program and increase interest for SWCD technical assistance. Encouraging new farmers to participate will increase farm diversity within the CRF program. Proposals that include new participants or beginning farmers as defined below will receive five (5) preference points to be applied to the overall application score. Preference points will be added to multi-farm operation applications where a new participant or beginning farmer qualifies. Preference points will be applied by Program staff at application review based on information provided on the application form and by utilizing the State Committee's internal database of past participants.

- New Participant – a farm operation that has not been awarded a CRF or AgNPS grant in the past 10 years.
- Beginning Farmer – an individual or entity who has not operated a farm for more than 10 consecutive years.

3. Conflict of Interest

If the project application includes eligible participating farm operator(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 must be disclosed. 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 SWCD 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 CRF application and any resulting contract is mentioned. Such recusals are intended for all discussions and decision-making related to the application and contract for that specific project of the CRF Program.

The CRF Program application must include 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 the votes relating to the CRF Program 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 exited the meeting and returned to the meeting.

4. Project Eligibility

Proposed projects must address GHG emission reduction, carbon sequestration, and/or on-farm resiliency and adaptation to climate change in one of the Tracks outlined below. Applications may be for one farm operation or for multiple farm operations. Projects should have defined measurable outcomes and deliverables for reducing GHG emissions, increasing carbon sequestration, or improving resiliency. Strong proposals will show opportunities both in terms of mitigation and adaptation/resiliency. See Appendices to this RFP (Guidance Documents) for more detailed information about eligible practice systems and components for each Track.

All applications must be for ONE of the following Tracks:

- Track 1: Livestock Management: Alternative Waste Management & Precision Feed Management
- Track 2: Adaptation & Resiliency
- Track 3: Healthy Soils NY (Systems & BMPs that support soil health and agroforestry)
- Track 4: Agricultural Forestry Management (for carbon sequestration)

Track 1: Livestock Management: Alternative Waste Management & Precision Feed Management

The following practice systems from the Agricultural Best Management Practice Systems Catalogue are eligible for cost share under Track 1:

- Manure Storage Cover and Flare Project (via the Waste Storage and Transfer System)
- Waste Storage and Transfer System, may include but is not limited to:
  - Compost Bedded Pack
- Short-Term Waste Collection and Transfer System
- Manure and Agricultural Waste Treatment System, may include but is not limited to:
  - Solid / liquid separation equipment (e.g., mechanical screw press, sand separation)
  - Bedding alternatives to sand for cover and flare preparation (e.g., livestock stall adjustments or conversions)
  - Waste management through composting
  - Innovative manure treatment technologies
- Prescribed Rotational Grazing System
- Feed Management System, may include:
  - Services, equipment, and monitoring necessary to implement precision feed management plan

Track 2: Adaptation & Resiliency

The following practice systems from the Agricultural Best Management Practice Systems Catalogue and Practice components from the Green Infrastructure chapter of the New York State Stormwater Management Design Manual are eligible for cost share under Track 2:

- Riparian Buffer System
- Stream Corridor and Shoreline Management System
- Erosion Control System – Structural
- Green Infrastructure Systems – NYS Stormwater Management Design Manual
- Irrigation Water Management System, may include:
  - Weather monitoring systems and tools
- Access Control System
- Prescribed Rotational Grazing System

Track 3: Healthy Soils NY (Soil health management and agroforestry practice systems.)

The following practice systems from the Agricultural Best Management Practice Systems Catalogue are eligible for cost share under Track 3:

- Soil Health Systems and associated practices, including but not limited to:
  - Weather monitoring systems and tools
  - Equipment to prevent or reduce soil compaction from farm vehicle traffic

- Integrated Pest Management System
  - Weather monitoring system
- Erosion Control System – Structural
- Nutrient Management System – Cultural, may include:
  - Application equipment for manure injection/incorporation or reduction in synthetic fertilizer use with an existing Nutrient Management Plan
  - Forage or grain yield monitor systems with GPS, mass flow meter, and dry matter sensing capabilities to improve nutrient management planning and implementation
  - Weather monitoring systems and tools
- Prescribed Rotational Grazing System
- Riparian Buffer System
- Agroforestry System

Track 4: Agricultural Forestry Management (carbon sequestration)

The following practice systems from the Agricultural Best Management Practice Systems Catalogue are eligible for cost share under Track 4:

- Forestry/Agroforestry Systems

III. PROJECT COSTS

1. Eligible Expenses:

- District personnel costs for contract administration.
- Outreach and technical assistance costs for soil health training, cover crop signs, etc.
- Architectural, engineering, consultant, and legal services.
- Best Management Practice (BMP) system implementation costs.
- Other direct expenses related to implementation (e.g., funding for cultural resource impact determinations for ground disturbing BMPs, custom application services, equipment directly related to the function of the BMP) – Form SW-6 Other Direct Expenses must be completed.

Equipment - State assistance payments may only be used to cover the lease or purchase of equipment that is directly related to the function of the proposed BMP.

Per Unit Rates - Certain BMPs and/or BMP components are eligible for per unit/acre rates, as indicated within this RFP or the Soil Health Policy. Please see the Soil Health Policy and Guidance Document for Healthy Soils NY for more information. Soil Health and manure tests are also listed as set rates and can be included with Other Direct Expenses.

Operation & Maintenance - All costs associated with the operation and maintenance of BMPs will be the sole responsibility of the farm operator and cannot be used as a match

to state funding. The Project Sponsor must require that the farm operator maintain the practice for the entirety of the expected lifespan. For information on BMP lifespans please refer to the Agricultural BMP Systems Catalogue.

Any questions or requests for clarification regarding eligible costs should be asked during the open question and answer period, and all determinations will be added to the Questions and Answers document.

2. Match Requirements

See the table below for cost share percentages. The specific match requirements for each Track are detailed in Appendices A through D (Guidance Documents). The state funded contribution in dollars or percentages cannot increase due to budget changes or variations.

Track	Cost Share
Track 1 – Livestock Management: Alternative Waste Mgmt. & Precision Feed	Up to 80% of total eligible costs for BMP implementation; and up to 100% for outreach and technical assistance.
Track 2 – Adaptation & Resiliency	Up to 80% of total eligible costs for BMP implementation; and up to 100% for outreach and technical assistance.
Track 3 – Healthy Soils NY	Up to 80% of total eligible costs for BMP implementation; and up to 100% for outreach and technical assistance.
Track 4 – Agricultural Forestry Management	Up to 80% of total eligible costs for BMP implementation; and Up to 100% of per acre planting rate and for outreach and technical assistance

Farm operator contributions used as match may be in the form of cash, or in-kind services which are calculated using an assigned cash value. This cash value of services must be reasonable and is subject to adjustment by the State Committee. Project Sponsor match, if applicable, may be in the form of in-kind services and/or cash (non-state funds).

Funds from the CRF Program will be provided contingent upon the Project Sponsor obtaining necessary funds to provide the required match.

Project Sponsor and farm operator contributions and expenditures made or incurred prior to the contract start date or after contract completion, as designated by the Department, may not be utilized as matching funds or reimbursed by the state.

PLEASE NOTE: A combination of state funds and match funds shall not result in a payment to the farm operator that is greater than 100% of the final project costs.

Note for Track 1 — Livestock Management: Alternative Waste Management & Precision Feed Management: **Manure liquid/solid separation equipment may be cost-shared by state funds as a standalone project.** CNMP development costs may be utilized as

farm operator match when applying for funding under Track 1. Updates to an existing CNMP for the purpose of implementing the Agricultural Waste Storage Cover and Flare Project may also be utilized as farm operator match. See Appendix A (Track 1 Guidance Document) for more information.

3. Hourly Rate Recommendations

The following rates were derived from an inquiry of hourly rates for each of the listed positions from SWCDs. The following hourly rates are the FY 2025-2026 SWCD Hourly Rates Recommendations from the State Committee. The 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 9 of the CRF Program Grants are as follows:

	Hourly Rate	Overhead	Total
Managerial	$74.00	$15.00	$89.00
Senior Technical*	$60.00	$15.00	$75.00
Technical	$50.00	$15.00	$65.00
Secretarial	$49.00	$15.00	$64.00
Engineer	$74.00	$15.00	$89.00

*10 years or more of experience

In the above figures, the $15 per hour overhead cannot be paid with state funds and needs to be shown in the Project Sponsor column within Overhead Expenses. The budget form provides a column for the $15 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 recommended 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 charged.

Non-SWCD Personnel

Local agency personnel (e.g., NRCS, CCE) and private sector consultants can opt to be reimbursed based on the recommended hourly rates, including overhead. Such non-SWCD personnel may opt to be reimbursed based on their actual rates as billed by them in the normal course of business. Overhead expenses cannot be charged if actual rates are used.

Farm Operator Rates

Hourly rates have not been specified for farm operators wishing to contribute in-kind match. Districts may name a reasonable hourly rate based on the work the farm operator will be performing. The $15 per hour overhead cannot be used for farm operators.

IV. PROPOSAL FORMAT

1. Application Submittal

The application will be made available through the Department's website and the State Committee SharePoint site. To be considered complete, the entire application packet must consist of:

- the completed and signed application form with the signed proposal checklist;
- the SW Workbook (see details below);
- a District Board Resolution supporting the application (approved at a Board Meeting and signed);
- a State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) map (optional);
- pictures and maps with labels of project location/conditions (optional); and
- additional/supporting materials (optional).

SW Workbook

The SW Workbook includes the following forms which must be completed and submitted with the signed application form.

- SW-1 – List of Participating Farm Operators
- SW-2 – Budget
- SW-3 – Best Management Practice List
- SW-4 – Personnel Form
- SW-5 – Plan of Work
- SW-6 – Other Direct Expenses

District Board Resolution

The Resolution from the District Board of Directors must be voted upon, approved, and signed during a board meeting with a quorum, complying with Open Meetings Law. If more than one District is making application as a group, then a separate resolution is required for each District.

Pictures and Maps

It is strongly suggested that pictures and/or maps with labels showing project location be included. Labeled maps or pictures of project location can aid in clearly communicating issues that are being addressed or prevented and how BMPs will be implemented.

Support Letters

Support letters should not be included with proposals. Support or partners for the project should be clearly detailed in the application narrative.

Application Submittal Process

Documents to Submit:

- *Complete application package as a PDF document - All documents being submitted as part of the application must be uploaded to SharePoint as a single PDF document.*
- *The SW Workbook must also be submitted in its original format as an excel file.*

The applications are time stamped by SharePoint! **Do NOT delete or re-upload documents following the grant deadline.** To submit the application, please open your District's folder within the SharePoint District Upload Folder. Open (or, if necessary, create) a "Climate Resilient Farming" subfolder and create subfolders for each application you will be submitting. All application materials should be named with the District name and application number/project ID. The Project ID should be in the following format: **District# - track# - prioritization#**. Any questions regarding the SharePoint system should be directed to the SharePoint administrator or CRF Program Manager.

All applicants must also submit the Excel Workbook with forms SW-1, SW-2, SW-3, SW-4, SW-5, and SW-6. The sheets are protected and will not allow changes to formulas — contact the Program Manager if something needs to be changed. This will reduce administrative time both for the applicant and the Department by streamlining the process and reducing the risk of errors.

Supporting documents should also be included as part of the PDF document such as floodplain maps, documentation of past or current storm damage, Emergency Management Plans, COMET-Planner estimations (or other tools such as COMET-Farm, RUSLE2, etc.), etc.

2. Budget

The SW Workbook will provide the budget and implementation details of each application. The SW Workbook must be completed and submitted for each proposal 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, farm operator, EQIP) of the Project Sponsor and farm operator's matching contribution. Please refer to the "Match Requirements" section of this RFP for additional information.

- **Please make sure that the amounts specified in the RFP application form match the SW forms exactly.**
- **All numbers should be rounded up to the nearest whole number.**

Prevailing Wage

Pursuant to section 224-a of the Labor Law, projects where total construction project costs (i.e. BMP implementation costs) exceed $5 million may be subject to prevailing wage requirements under sections 220 and 220-b of the Labor Law.

Contingency

The proposed budget may include a "Contingency Account" of up to 10 percent **of BMP expenditures** to cover cost overruns **unless funding is requested with an approved per unit rate payment. Practices using per unit rates cannot request a contingency.** A Contingency Account will require a Project Sponsor and/or farm operator contribution that is the same as the match percentages of the BMP(s). **Contingency funds may be used only with prior approval** by the Director of the Division of Land and Water Resources, the Assistant Director, or the appropriate regional Associate Environmental Analyst. Please indicate whether the sponsor and/or farm operator contribution match will be cash or in-kind.

V. EVALUATION CRITERIA & METHOD OF AWARD

1. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated and ranked by Track. Funds will be allotted separately to each Track as detailed in the Section I.6 "Available Funding". Each proposal will be assessed and scored based on the general criteria set forth below.

- GHG Emission Reduction and Resiliency (30 points)
- Adequate Scope of Work (10 points)
- Budgeting and Cost Effectiveness (10 points)

Track specific criteria for each of the above categories is included in Appendix E of this RFP.

2. Method of Award

Evaluators will record proposal scores in each of the three scoring categories. The scores of the evaluators will be aggregated and preference points (see section II.2) will be assessed on the aggregated score to make up the proposal's grand total score. Proposals will then be ranked by their grand total score from highest to lowest to make up the Ranked List for awards within each Track. The maximum available aggregated score is 200 points based on four evaluators awarding a maximum score of 50 points each. Proposals that receive a score of less than 100 or 50% of the maximum available aggregated score, before preference points are assigned, will not be considered for funding. With preference points earned the maximum grand total score is 205.

The advisory members of the State Committee 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 State Committee official meeting minutes. The State Committee shall notify in writing those Districts selected for funding.

VI. AWARDS

1. Award Notification

Project 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.

2. Debriefing of Non-Awardees

Following the announcement of the applicants awarded funding agreements under this RFP, unsuccessful applicants may request a debriefing from the 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 Jennifer Clifford, CRF Program Manager via e-mail at jennifer.clifford@agriculture.ny.gov.

VII. CONTRACTS & PAYMENT TERMS

1. Contracts

Once an application has been selected for funding, the State Committee staff will contact the Project Sponsor and ask them to provide any 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 State Committee reserves the right to rescind its approval of the proposal for funding and instead award the funding to other eligible unfunded project proposals.

The standard contract term for projects will be four years. The State Committee reserves the right to modify the standard contract term. The contract term will be provided to each awardee in the Plan of Work Memo. Funding of proposals that extend over more than one state fiscal year will be subject to the reappropriation of funds.

Any awards for projects under $10,000 may be subject to a Letter of Agreement rather than a full contract process, subject to the discretion of the Department.

Subcontracts

All subcontracts used by the Project Sponsor 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.

The District must have an executed funding agreement with each participating far m operator prior to submitting claims for payment of implementation funds under the Agreement. The farm operator 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 farm operator. The amount and source of all farm operator contributions must be identified, and a commitment of match for contingency funds must be included. If the source of the farm operator contribution originates from a Federal or local program, the amount and specific source should be identified. The farm operator 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 will be reduced accordingly.

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

2. Payment

Payments 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 District 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 District shall comply with the procedures of the Comptroller of the State of New York for authorizing electronic payments. The District acknowledges that it will not receive payment on any invoices submitted under this Agreement if it does not comply with the Comptroller'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 District in a separate interest-bearing account. Prior to the final payment, the District must submit to the Department a statement of interest earned during the term of the Agreement. The final payment will be offset by the amount of any interest earned.

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. When submitting a payment request other than the initial advance, a progress report shall be filed with the State Committee. A progress report must also be submitted when submitting a contract amendment request. A comprehensive final report must be submitted no later than 60 days following completion of the project or Contract end date.

The final report shall include a final budget report detailing expenditures, including invoices and proof of payments; a Climate Resilient Farming Project Completion Report (reviewed and signed by State Committee staff); a description of the work completed, and problems encountered, if any, and such other information as the State Committee may deem necessary. The Climate Resilient Farming Project Completion Report will also include photographs of the work site before and after construction, BMP Procurement Records, Project Expenditure Summary Form, Consultant Engineer's Certification of BMPs (if needed) and details of the operation of the funded systems regarding greenhouse gas mitigation and climate adaptation as specified in the application.

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

The Department and the Office of the State Comptroller reserve the right to audit the Project Sponsor's books and records relating to the performance of the project for the term of the contract and for a period of six years from the end date of the contract.

4. State of New York Contract for Grants

New York State has developed a standard contract for grants that is required for all state grant contracts. The State of New York Contract for Grants will be executed for all projects awarded under the Climate Resilient Farming Grant Program, and successful applicants will be responsible for complying with the terms and conditions contained therein. A sample contract will be posted with this RFP on the Department's website and the State Committee SharePoint site.

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. Any contract resulting from this RFP will not be valid, effective, or binding upon the Department, or the State until it is signed by the Contractor and the Department and approved by the Attorney General and the State Comptroller.

VIII. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

1. Reserved Rights

The Department and the State Committee reserve the right to:

- Modify proposal submission requirements as deemed necessary with appropriate written notice to all potential applicants.

- Reject any or all proposals received in response to this RFP.
- Withdraw the RFP at any time, at the State Committee's sole discretion.
- Make an award under the RFP in whole or part.
- Disqualify any applicant whose conduct and/or proposal fails to conform to the requirements of the RFP.
- Seek clarifications and revisions of proposals.
- Prior to the deadline for proposals, amend the RFP specifications 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.
- Prior to the deadline for proposals, direct applicants to submit proposal modifications addressing subsequent RFP amendments.
- Change any of the scheduled dates.
- Eliminate any mandatory, non-material specifications with which all applicants cannot comply.
- Waive any requirements that are not material.
- 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.
- Waive or modify minor irregularities in proposals received after prior notification to the applicant.
- Award more than one funding agreement to the same successful applicant resulting from this RFP.
- Negotiate with successful applicants any matter within the scope of the RFP in the best interests of the State.
- Make all final decisions with respect to the amount of funding and the timing of payments to be provided to an applicant.

All proposals submitted in response to this RFP will become the property of the State Committee.

2. Freedom of Information

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

3. State Historic Preservation Requirements

Pursuant to Section 14.09 of the Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law, the Department is required to consult with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) concerning the impact of any projects funded by the Department on any property listed on the national register of historic places or on the state register or that is determined to be eligible for the state register. The Department reserves the right to request such

additional information as is necessary to allow the SHPO to make a determination regarding the potential impacts of any state funded project on historical sites or artifacts and possible alternatives which avoid or mitigate adverse impacts.

Appendix A: Track 1 Guidance Document – Livestock Management: Alternative Waste Management & Precision Feed Management

Goal of Track 1:

Reduce methane emissions from livestock operations including manure management through the collection and destruction of methane or methane avoidance and the reduction of methane from enteric fermentation. **Projects must demonstrate a reduction or avoidance in methane emissions.**

Cover and Flare Project Description

Methane is produced when volatile manure solids are stored in wet, anaerobic conditions within a storage. Conditions that lead to methane production must currently exist at a dairy or livestock operation for methane emission reductions to be achieved through a CRF project. Agricultural waste storage cover and flare projects have the capacity to immediately impact both the GHG emissions from the farm and the farm's resiliency to major precipitation events.

Emphasis and prioritization will be given to manure storage cover and flare projects within Track 1. Prioritization will specifically be given to manure storage cover and flares that have been provided cost-share for the construction of the manure storage through AgNPS and the Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) Manure Storage Program. Manure storages which reduce daily spreading by farmers have been utilized to meet water quality goals in NYS.

The State Committee has developed a cover and flare assessment tool to help determine if this practice would be a good fit for the farm.

Cover and Flare Project Components

Cover and flare projects involve installing an impermeable cover over a manure storage facility, piping the emitted methane and other gases away from the facility, burning the piped gas in a flare, and collecting and transferring precipitation from the cover to a stable outlet. Eligible component BMPs for cover and flare projects may include:

- Manure and Agricultural Waste Treatment System
    - Roofs and Covers (NRCS 367)
    - Waste Transfer (NRCS 634)
    - Pumping Plant (NRCS 533)
    - Waste Treatment (NRCS 629; includes the flare component and waste processing and nutrient recovery systems)
    - Waste Separation Facility (NRCS 632; for solid / liquid separation equipment, e.g., mechanical screw press, sand separation)
    - Anaerobic Digester (NRCS 366 NOT eligible for cost-share can be used as match only)
    - Nutrient Management (NRCS 590; for plan updates as match only)
    - For water conveyance off the manure storage cover:

- Pond (NRCS 378) (ponds must consider design conditions to reduce methane i.e., proper siting, bubblers)
- Critical Area Planting (NRCS 342)
- Grass Waterway (NRCS 412)
- Lined Waterway or Outlet (NRCS 468)

The following are required elements for system efficiency and monitoring:

- Manure liquid/solid separator equipment is eligible for state cost-share and is a required component of the covered and flared manure storage to reduce solids accumulation in the storage. A dairy farm that uses organic bedding materials (i.e., non-sand bedding) is an ideal candidate for a cover and flare project.
    - Three-phase power is an eligible expense when necessary for the implementation of the proposed practices.
- A flare is required with:
    - auto-ignition, powered by battery/solar or direct connection to electrical service,
    - a windshield, and
    - monitoring equipment to measure and log gas flow (e.g., a meter) and flare combustion status (e.g., a thermocouple) to allow the farmer and/or District to gauge methane destruction and operation and maintenance needs over time.

Cover and Flare Project Cost-Share

Funds are to provide cost share reimbursement payments for implementation of approved practices. Cover and flare projects are eligible for 80% cost-share. Projects will receive State funds up to 80% of the costs for eligible BMPs.

Farms must:

- Have an updated Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) including up-to-date soil and manure tests.

Cover and Flare GHG Reduction Estimation

Agricultural waste storage covers capture the methane emitted from the waste, and the flare component converts the methane (CH_4) into carbon dioxide (CO_2). Since CH_4 has 84 times the global warming potential of CO_2 on a 20-year timescale, this conversion results in significant GHG emission savings, as equated in CO_2 equivalents (CO_2eGWP20). The annual amount of CO_2eGWP20 saved through the process depends on the volume of the storage, number, and type of animals the storage services, shape of the storage, and feed management.

To aid in GHG reduction estimates from future covered and flared liquid storages, annual baseline CO_2eGWP20 emissions have been calculated for three scenarios of existing manure storages using the 2006/2019 IPCC methods, below (https://www.ipcc-nggip.iges.or.jp/public/2019rf/vol4.html). Estimates are provided for a mature cow's worth, and a heifer's worth of manure stored in each scenario. **Choose the scenario that**

best describes the current storage that is proposed to be covered/flared and multiply the emission estimates by the total number of cows and/or heifers contributing to the storage (note, all calculations are in metric tons, MT).

Scenario 1: long-term (e.g., 6-month periods) anaerobic storage of liquid/slurry manure

- Mature dairy cow manure stored anaerobically for 6 months: 9.6 MT CO_2eGWP20/cow/year
- Dairy heifer manure stored anaerobically for 6 months: 2.9 MT CO_2eGWP20/heifer/year

Scenario 2: solid separation and long-term (e.g., 6-month periods) anaerobic storage of separated liquid manure

- Mature dairy cow manure stored anaerobically for 6 months: 4.8 MT CO_2eGWP20/cow/year
- Dairy heifer manure stored anaerobically for 6 months: 1.5 MT CO_2eGWP20/heifer/year

Scenario 3: anaerobic digestion, solid separation, and long-term (e.g., 6-month periods) anaerobic storage of separated liquid digestate

- Mature dairy cow digestate stored anaerobically for 6 months: 1.6 MT CO_2eGWP20/cow/year
- Dairy heifer digestate stored anaerobically for 6 months: 0.5 MT CO_2eGWP20/heifer/year

Track 1 projects should illustrate the mitigation of methane. Projects will be judged on mitigation based on the size of the storages, animal numbers, flare capacity, commitment to tracking/testing the system, and the farm's commitment to GHG emission reductions overall.

Cover and Flare System Adaptation and Resiliency Benefits

Climate change predictions for New York State include increased overall precipitation as well as more severe and more common storm/flooding events. The cover component of the cover and flare system prevents rainwater from entering the storage, reducing the volume of manure to be stored by 300,000-700,000 gallons/year per acre of storage covered (Shepherd et al., 2008). Those gallons of rainwater will remain clean water not mixed or contaminated with manure, preventing potential pollution, and the manure storage is significantly less likely to overtop in a storm or as the result of a wet season. Water savings and plans for reuse should be highlighted in the proposal.

Cover and Flare Project Co-Benefits

In addition to the emissions reduction, preventing rainwater from entering the storage eliminates the need to pump or haul rainwater leading to energy reductions and increased resiliency. It also increases the nitrogen available to crops from manure by 30-50%

(Steinberg, et al., 2015) by eliminating rainwater dilution and NH_3 emissions. Potential fuel savings in addition to other co-benefits should be highlighted in the proposal.

Cover and Flare System Permits

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Air Resources - Operating Permit Program has determined that per 6 NYCRR 201-3.2(c)(49) covered manure storage exhausting to a flare or other appropriate control device is an exempt activity.

MMRV

Projects implementing cover and flare systems will be required to conduct or participate in some measurement, monitoring, reporting, and verification of GHG reduction.

Other Eligible Practice Systems for Track 1

A cover and flare project may not work for every farm. Other manure management systems that reduce methane emissions or provide methane avoidance are also eligible in Track 1. Proposed projects should be developed from an appropriate AEM Tier 3A or 3B plan (or equivalent, e.g., NRCS component plan, Dairy Advancement CNMP, CAFO CNMP).

The following manure management practices, from the Ag BMP Catalogue for manure collection/separation and storage/treatment methods are incentivized through the CRF Program. Practice systems described are guidelines and not an exclusive list. If, however, an applicant chooses systems or components not identified below, the application must include a detailed explanation in the narrative section.

Applications may propose complete systems or components of a system with a quantifiable mitigation benefit. The following manure management practices, i.e., combinations of manure collection/separation and storage/treatment methods are currently incentivized through the CRF Program.

Eligible systems and BMPs may include:

- **Waste Storage and Transfer System**
    - Waste Transfer (NRCS 634)
    - Pumping Plant (NRCS 533)
    - Waste Treatment (NRCS 629; includes waste processing and nutrient recovery systems)
    - Compost bedded pack
- **Short-Term Waste Collection and Transfer System**
- **Manure and Agricultural Waste Treatment System**
    - Solid / liquid separation equipment (e.g., mechanical screw press, sand separation)
    - Bedding alternatives to sand for cover and flare preparation (e.g., livestock stall adjustments or conversions)
    - Waste management through composting

- Innovative manure treatment technologies

- **Prescribed Rotational Grazing System**
  - Conversion of non-pasture dairy or livestock operation to pasture-based management, Existing system enhancements should be applied for under Track 2 or 3)
  - Pasture-based management projects must currently manage/store some manure in wet/anaerobic conditions and introduce new practices that reduce the quantity of manure management under such conditions.
  - Note: For improved efficiency consider Energy-Related Agricultural Best Practices Factsheet on Animal Waterers for Livestock Farms – (External Link - https://agenergyny.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/LivestockFarmEfficiency_NoEnergyWaterersFactsheet_v1final.pdf)
- **Precision Feed Management System**
  - Projects proposing a Precision Feed Management System should include the use of precision feed management tools, digital technology tools, consultant services, equipment, monitors, etc. for state cost-share with matching time from the farmer for implementing the use of said tools and equipment.
  - Feed Management (NRCS 592)
  - Use of Precision Feed Management tools (i.e., Cornell CNCPS - https://cals.cornell.edu/animal-science/outreach-extension/publications-resources-software/cornell-net-carbohydrate-and-protein-system)
  - The farmer's time implementing [Precision] Feed Management can only be proposed as match; Districts may choose to use the latest EQIP rate for NRCS 592 Feed Management instead of the farmer's actual time/labor costs.
  - Practices should be proposed for a three-year basis.
  - The development of a Precision Feed Management plan is not eligible for cost-share. Planning updates can be proposed as landowner match.

Non-Cover and Flare Project Cost-Share

Funds are to provide cost share reimbursement payments for implementation of approved practices. Manure management and precision feed management systems are eligible for up to 80% cost-share. Projects will receive state funds up to 80% of the costs for eligible BMPs.

GHG Reduction Estimation of Non-Cover and Flare Practices

Net GHG emission reductions are calculated by subtracting estimated post-project GHG emissions from the baseline scenario or current emissions. The project boundary includes both methane emissions from manure as well as fossil fuel-based carbon dioxide emissions associated with manure management activities. Tools that may be useful include COMET-Farm or other tools such as COMET-Planner, RUSLE2, Cornell Net Carbohydrate and Protein System (CNCPS), etc.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), 2006. Guidelines for National GHG Inventories, Volume 4, Chapter 10, Tier 2 method.

Shepherd, T., C.A. Gooch, K.J. Czymmek, J. Karszes. 2008. Covers for Long-Term Dairy Manure Storages
Part 2: Estimating Your Farm's Annual Cost and Benefit. Available at https://prodairy.cals.cornell.edu/environmental-systems/manure-management/storage/ (verified 16 December 2019).

Steinberg, S, C.A. Gooch, K.J. Czymmek. 2015. Covered manure storage systems: Tangible and non-tangible benefits. The Manager (2015-01). Available at http://ecommons.cornell.edu/bitstream/handle/1813/39052/PRO-DAIRY%201.15%20p23.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y (verified 16 December 2019).

Appendix B: Track 2 Guidance Document – Adaptation and Resiliency

Goal of Track 2:

Enhance climate resiliency and adaptive capacity of the farm operation. Water management projects are a priority of Track 2. Water management is an effort to prepare agricultural producers for two anticipated and experienced impacts of climate change: flood events and drought conditions.

Water Management Description

New York has seen a 70% increase in the amount of precipitation falling from the most intense rain events from 1958-2010 (Horton *et al.*, 2014). Climate projections expect that trend of more intense rainfall in a single rain event and increased flooding risk to continue. It is also predicted that increased overall precipitation and more frequent—possibly annual—short-term (1-3 month) droughts will occur (Frumhoff, *et al.*, 2007). Proactive water management decreases the impacts of these weather patterns, by providing water retention (reducing flows during floods and providing storage during drought) and by preparing areas of concentrated flow (drainage ditches, swales, streams) to accept and safely convey larger volumes of water. Floodwaters can also transport sediment and pollutants to receiving waterbodies impacting water quality.

Improved water management on farms and surrounding watersheds through the implementation of conservation systems can significantly enhance a farm's resiliency. Some conservation systems, such as transferring land to perennial production or forest buffer, can also create beneficial carbon sinks.

The "water management" umbrella includes many conservation systems and component best management practices (*see* next page) which stabilize or reinforce conveyances, reduce flows, and/or store water. Selection of the most appropriate system or combination of systems will depend heavily on site-specific conditions and goals.

Cost-Share

Funds are to provide cost share reimbursement payments for implementation of approved practices. Adaptation and resiliency systems are eligible for up to 80% cost-share. Projects will receive state funds up to 80% of the costs for eligible BMPs.

Project Location for Water Management Projects Only

In some cases, the water management project location that will lead to enhanced farm resiliency may not be on active farmland. For Track 2 Water Management ***only***, projects may be proposed on lands not being operated as active farms if the project(s) will increase the resiliency of farm(s) upstream or downstream from the project(s) location. For example, stream corridor management systems consisting of obstruction removal and/or floodplain reconnection can decrease a downstream farm's vulnerability to floods and/or significant impacts from floods. In all cases, specific farms that will benefit from water management systems funded under this program must be identified on the Track 2 application, whether contributing match or not.

Water Management Project Designs

Projects should demonstrate being designed to a higher storm frequency/duration than the minimum required by the applicable NRCS standard(s) and/or providing greater volumes of available stormwater storage capacity. Projects should note if they are designed to withstand a 100-year flood or greater.

Eligible Practice Systems

The following practices, from the Ag BMP Catalogue are incentivized through the CRF Program Track 2. Practice systems described are guidelines and not an exclusive list. If, however, an applicant chooses systems or components not identified below, the application must include detailed explanation in the narrative section.

Specific practices may also be used from the New York State Stormwater Management Design Manual.

Proposed projects using systems from the Ag BMP Catalogue must be developed from an appropriate AEM Tier 3A or 3B plan (or equivalent, e.g., NRCS component plan, Dairy Advancement CNMP, CAFO CNMP). Other projects focused on systems beyond the Ag BMP Catalogue (e.g., New York State Stormwater Management Design Manual for green infrastructure practices) should be appropriately planned to ensure feasible practice components and budgets in the application.

Erosion Control Systems – Structural prevent erosion by directing, slowing, and diffusing concentrated water flows as they travel from the farm or field to the waterbody, as well as components that to provide upland water storage. Given the potential for more common/much larger storms, consider designing for a much larger flow than typical, building new systems, and/or strengthening existing systems. Eligible BMPs include:

To direct, slow, and diffuse water flows:

- Diversion (NRCS 362)
- Grassed and lined waterways (NRCS 412, 468)
- Culverts
- Rock inlet/outlet protection (NRCS 468)
- Water and Sediment Control Basins (NRCS 350, 638)
- Grade stabilization structures (NRCS 410)
- Rock barrier (NRCS 555)
- Terrace (NRCS 600)
- Riparian Forest Buffer (NRCS 391)

To provide upland storage:

- Wetland (NRCS 657, 658, 659)
- Pond (NRCS 378)
    - Pond projects should consider including methane reduction technologies and practices such as utilizing a solar powered bubbler, biological controls, and potential others.
- Irrigation Water Management (NRCS 449)

Green Infrastructure Systems can mitigate stormwater runoff and restore natural ground cover aiding in soil health. Green infrastructure can be a useful tool in urban and rural farm settings. Green Infrastructure practices can be found in New York State Stormwater Management Design Manual - Chapter 5 Green Infrastructure.

Irrigation Water Management Systems provide upland water storage, improving options during drought and the capacity to store water during intense rainfall events. Consider the siting of the system as well as enhanced capacity. Eligible BMPs include:

- Irrigation Water Management (NRCS 449)
- Irrigation Pipeline (NRCS 430)
- Irrigation System, Microirrigation (NRCS 441)
- Irrigation Reservoir (NRCS 436)
- Weather monitoring and soil moisture systems and tools

Stream Corridor and Shoreline Management Systems stabilize and reinforce existing waterways to accommodate high flows with minimal damage. This system could be used to address unmet needs from previous events that still pose threats or as proactive steps. Eligible BMPs include:

- Channel Bed Stabilization (NRCS 584)
- Stream Bank and Shoreline Protection (NRCS 580)
- Open Channel (NRCS 582)
- Clearing and Snagging (NRCS 326)
- Obstruction Removal (NRCS 500)

Riparian Buffer Systems include components to slow down and soak in water in the event of a flood. Eligible BMPs include:

- Riparian Forest Buffer (NRCS 391)
- Tree/shrub Establishment and Preparation (NRCS 490, 612)

Prescribed Rotational Grazing and Access Control Systems have components that are at particular risk to damage during flood events. **Consider strengthening existing systems or building new, stronger systems for flood resiliency.** (New grazing systems are eligible under Track 1). Eligible BMPs include:

- Fence (NRCS 382)
- Stream Crossings (NRCS 578)

NOTE: Erosion Control System - Structural, Riparian Buffer System, and Prescribed Rotational Grazing Systems are also components of Track 3 – Healthy Soils NY. Projects can only apply to one track.

Pollinator Protection

The State Committee strongly encourages applicants to enhance on-farm biodiversity through utilizing plant species (in applicable management practices) that support

pollinator habitat and help meeting the goals identified in the NYS Pollinator Protection Plan (Update 2020).

Quantification of Project Benefits and Co-Benefits

Quantification of project benefits and co-benefits may include hydrology information for water management projects. Including calculating storm runoff volumes, peak rates of discharge, storage volumes for floodwater reservoirs. The TR-55 – Urban Hydrology for Small Watersheds report from HydroCAD can provide hydrology information.

GHG Reduction Estimation

An estimation of the reduction in GHG emissions must be calculated using USDA-NRCS COMET-Planner or COMET-Farm tool. The COMET-Planner or COMET-Farm estimate should be used for applicable practices to answer application questions relating to GHG reduction estimates. Other tools may be used with a description justifying its use.

The calculator tool is available at:
COMET-Planner - http://comet-planner.com/
COMET-Farm - https://comet-farm.com/

Many water management practice systems are relatively low in reducing GHG emissions or creating carbon sinks. Project should describe how they will increase resiliency of the farm and help the farm to prepare for and adapt to a changing climate.

Converting annual croplands to perennial croplands or riparian forest buffers will create small carbon sinks, so the GHG mitigation aspects of projects in this track will be scored based on such conversions, if present.

Frumhoff, P.C., J.J. McCarthy, J.M. Melillo, S.C. Moser, and D.J. Wuebbles. 2007. Confronting Climate Change in the U.S. Northeast: Science, Impacts, and Solutions. Synthesis report of the Northeast Climate Impacts Assessment (NECIA). Cambridge, MA: Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS).

Horton, R., G. Yohe, W. Easterling, R. Kates, M. Ruth, E. Sussman, A. Whelchel, D. Wolfe, and F. Lipschultz, 2014: Ch. 16: Northeast. Climate Change Impacts in the United States: The Third National Climate Assessment, J. M. Melillo, Terese (T.C.) Richmond, and G. W. Yohe, Eds., U.S. Global Change Research Program, 16-1-nn.

Appendix C: Track 3 Guidance Document – Healthy Soils NY

Goal of Track 3:

To improve soil health while reducing nitrous oxide and increasing carbon sequestration. The basic principles of soil health are to: keep the soil covered as much as possible, disturb the soil as little as possible, keep plants growing year-round, and diversify as much as possible with crop rotations and cover crops.

Soil Health Description

Improved soil health on farms can significantly enhance a farm's resiliency to the impacts of climate change, including benefits during times of drought, wet weather, as well as optimal growing conditions. Soil health practices can also create carbon sinks, increase water holding capacity and improve recycling of nitrogen by crops, thereby mitigating GHG emissions.

Soil Health Systems

Soil Health Systems consist of non-structural, management-based practices working in concert to control soil erosion, reduce runoff volumes, enhance soil health, and improve productivity of the land. Such systems advance soil health, water quality, and productivity through:

- reducing the intensity of tillage and oxidization of soil organic matter;
- maintaining greater soil cover throughout the year, by living crops or crop residues;
- preventing or slowing sheet and rill flows;
- increasing the diversity of crops grown throughout the rotation; and
- increasing organic matter additions to the soil, by crop residues or amendments.

Proposed projects must be developed from an appropriate AEM Tier 3A or 3B plan (or equivalent, e.g., NRCS component plan, Dairy Advancement CNMP, CAFO CNMP). A Soil Health System is based on a well-integrated, Cropland Soil Conservation Plan (or a Soil Conservation Plan within a broader Nutrient Management Plan or Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan). The Plan is utilized to assess risk of water and wind erosion and other soil health resource concerns and make specific recommendations for how various practices will work together to address those concerns. These recommendations may extend beyond the cultural practices addressed with this System to dovetail with other Agricultural BMP Systems on the farm, including Erosion Control System - Structural, Nutrient Management System - Cultural, Prescribed Rotational Grazing System, etc.

Soil Health Systems may standalone or be combined with other Agricultural BMP Systems.

Erosion Control System - Structural, Nutrient Management System - Cultural, Prescribed Rotational Grazing System, Riparian Buffer System, and Agroforestry Systems may contain soil health practices, which may include conservation crop rotations, reduced or no tillage, cover cropping, and nutrient management (*see* next page).

Greenhouse Gas Mitigation

Soil health strategies increase soil organic matter and soil carbon, which can—over time—become a carbon sink, sequestering carbon dioxide so that it does not serve as a greenhouse gas and impact climate change. While these gains are very easy to reverse and it is therefore hard to quantify long-term savings, certain practice systems will yield more/faster carbon savings than others. Having a year-round root keeps soil in place and allows soil carbon to accumulate, especially when combined with careful nutrient management. Perennial crops and grasses (pasture) build soil carbon even more effectively, so conversions from annual cropland to perennials or pasture will yield soil carbon savings.

Similarly, soil health practices in combination with nutrient management work to improve nitrogen use efficiency by crops, thereby reducing the potential for nitrous oxide (N_2O) emissions, a potent greenhouse gas (~264 times the global warming potential of CO_2 on a 20-year timescale). N_2O makes up 9 percent of all agricultural GHG emissions in NY. Efficient use of nitrogen fertilizer and manure can reduce N_2O emissions from cropland, improve water quality, and save the farmer money. Changes in management that include fewer tractor passes across the field result in fuel savings and reduced GHG emissions.

Adaptation

Climate change predictions for New York State include increased overall precipitation, more severe and more frequent storm/flooding events, and more common short-term droughts. Improved soil health produces benefits during all of these scenarios. Soils with more organic matter hold water more effectively, preventing the worst impacts of a dry season, and can serve as a sponge in a storm, reducing erosion and runoff. These benefits are especially pronounced with year-round cover and/or long-term perennial crops.

Projects that have strong potential in both areas of mitigation to reduce GHG emissions and adaptation to prepare farms for flood and drought conditions are most likely to be funded.

Soil Health Cost-Share

Funds are to provide cost share reimbursement payments for implementation of approved soil health practices. Soil Health systems are eligible for up to 80% cost-share. Projects will receive state funds up to 80% of the costs for eligible BMPs. When using the State Committee Soil Health Policy flat rate for a soil health practice the rate provided should be used at the provided cost-share percentage.

Eligible Practice Systems

Applications should be for systems, not discrete components. The following practices, from the Agricultural BMP Catalogue are incentivized through the CRF Program. Practice systems described are guidelines and not an exclusive list. If, however, an applicant chooses systems or components not identified below, the application must include detailed explanation in the narrative section.

Soil Health Systems increase soil organic matter, allow for increased water storage, and reduce sheet/rill erosion through reduced tilling and vegetative cover.

Eligible BMPs include:

- Conservation Crop Rotation (NRCS 528)
- Conservation Cover (NRCS 327)
- Contour Farming (NRCS 330)
- Contour Filter Strips (NRCS 332)
- Cover Crop (NRCS 340)
- Pasture and Hay Planting (NRCS 512)
- Mulching (NRCS 484)
- Residue and Tillage Management, No-Till (NRCS 329)
- Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced Till (NRCS 345)
- Strip Cropping (NRCS 585)
- Soil Carbon Amendment (NRCS 336; please review the new NRCS 336 for its planning requirements)
- Field Border (NRCS 386)
- Raised Beds (NRCS 812)

Farm Equipment, Technology, and Tools within Soil Health Systems

State assistance payments may only be used to cover equipment that is directly related to the function of the BMPs that are being proposed in the application.

Eligible items include, but are not limited to:

- Reduced/no-till equipment for tillage, seeding, etc.
- Central tire inflation systems or other equipment to prevent or reduce soil compaction from farm vehicle traffic.
- Frost fans or wind machines are eligible equipment under Track 3 Healthy Soils NY. Soil Health practices in combination with frost equipment is eligible for cost-share. Projects should show how they will reduce GHG emissions and increase resiliency using a frost fan when compared to their current practices for managing frost or extreme temperature. Projects should propose conducting companion soil health practices for frost protection.

Frost Protection

A frost fan can be included as a component of an Integrated Pest Management System or as a Soil Health System based on NRCS conservation practice standards:

- Pest Management Conservation (AC) (595) – weather monitoring, etc.
- Energy Efficient Agricultural Operation (No) (374) – frost fans, etc.

Applicants should select the System and all associated NRCS component practices on the SW-3 form for the project. The estimated costs for permanently fixed or stationary equipment associated with the practices should be included in the SW-3 budget. Equipment should be further characterized on the SW-6 form in the bottom table titled, “If equipment purchase is proposed, please complete the rest of the form below.” If

equipment is budgeted on the SW-3, do not include budget information in the top table on the SW-6. If equipment is moveable, such as frost fans on trailers or skids and weather stations, it should be budgeted and detailed on the SW-6 and not included in the SW3 to avoid doubling the project cost on the SW-2.

Erosion Control System – Structural prevents erosion by directing, slowing, and diffusing concentrated water flows as they travel from the farm or field to the waterbody, and can also include components that provide upland water storage or protection from the wind. Given the potential for more frequent/larger storms, consider designing for a much larger flow than typical, building new systems, and/or strengthening existing systems. Eligible BMPs **to direct, slow, or diffuse water flows or reduce wind erosion** include:

- Diversion (NRCS 362)
- Grassed Waterway (NRCS 412)
- Lined Waterway or Outlet (NRCS 468)
- Structure for Water Control (NRCS 587)
- Rock inlet/outlet protection (NRCS 468)
- Water and Sediment Control Basins (NRCS 350, 638)
- Grade stabilization structures (NRCS 410)
- Rock barrier (NRCS 555)
- Terrace (NRCS 600)
- Riparian Forest Buffer (NRCS 391)
- Herbaceous Wind Barriers (NRCS 603)
- Vegetative Barriers (NRCS 601)
- Filter Strips (NRCS 393)

Eligible BMPs to provide upland water storage include:

- Wetland (NRCS 657, 658, 659)
- Dam (NRCS 410)
- Pond (NRCS 378) – (consideration of methane reduction technologies/practices such as solar panels connected to bubblers, catfish, and potential others)

NOTE: Upland water storage practices could also fall under **Irrigation Water Management Systems**.

Prescribed Rotational Grazing Systems enhance soil health by providing more perennial pasture. (For pasture establishment projects apply under Track 1, for enhancements to existing pasture systems apply under Track 3)

Eligible BMPs include:

- Prescribed Grazing (NRCS 528)
- Forage and Biomass Planting (NRCS 512)
- Fence (NRCS 382)
- Stream Crossings (NRCS 578)

- Tree/Shrub Establishment and Tree/Shrub Site Preparation (NRCS 612 and NRCS 490)

Riparian Buffer System

Riparian buffer systems include components to slow down and soak in water in the event of a flood. Eligible BMPs include:

- Riparian Forest Buffer (NRCS 391)
- Riparian Herbaceous Cover (NRCS 390)
- Tree/shrub Establishment and Preparation (NRCS 612 and NRCS 660)
- Fence (NRCS 382)
- Stream Crossings (NRCS 578)

NOTE: Riparian Buffer Systems and Prescribed Rotational Grazing Systems are also components of Track 2 Adaptation and Resiliency. Projects can only apply to one track; applicants should determine which track is the best fit for the project.

Agroforestry System

Agroforestry practice systems add trees and forest management into a farming system. Agroforestry has the potential to elevate local food production and resiliency, improve water and air quality, provide storm and flood mitigation, increase drought resiliency, as well as other co-benefits.

Eligible BMPs include:

- Tree/Shrub Establishment and Tree/Shrub Site Preparation (NRCS 612 and NRCS 490)
- Structures for Wildlife (NRCS 649)
- Conservation Cover (NRCS 327)
- Critical Area Planting (NRCS 342)
- Erosion Control System – Structural

Integrated Pest Management Systems

- Weather monitoring and soil moisture systems and tools
- Specialized sprayer equipment

Nutrient Management System – Cultural

Nutrients are managed for the economic production of crops, forages, pasture, ornamentals, and biomass, and the protection of natural resources. Cultural nutrient management consists of applying nutrients and soil amendments to crops in the right amount, right source, right method, and right timing (“the 4Rs”) according to several, integrated factors:

- farm management and goals including realistic crop yields;
- an accurate estimate of crop nutrient needs;
- nutrients credits in soil and manure;
- nutrient credits from crop residues;
- risk assessments for runoff, leaching, and erosion;

- setbacks from hydrologically active areas;
- weather and soil conditions; and
- adaptive management over time.

A well-integrated Nutrient Management Plan provides recommendations for manure, fertilizer, process wastewaters, composts, or lime applications according to the factors, above. It promotes nutrient use efficiency and controls nutrient loss by focusing on the use of on-farm nutrient sources, emphasizing the 4Rs, and, in many cases, reducing nutrient imports onto farms. Nutrient Management Plan recommendations shall be based on the NRCS 590 Nutrient Management Standard for New York State.

Projects for Nutrient Management System – Cultural may include:

- **Advancing manure injection, manure incorporation, or precision nutrient application relative to current farm management.** Projects must demonstrate how they will further improve the application of nutrients relative to current management (i.e., not intended to support the continuation of management that's been adopted and is standard practice by a farm). The project and associated farm(s) must meet the following requirements when implementing manure injection, manure incorporation, or precision nutrient application practices:
    - have, implement, and annually update an NRCS 590 Nutrient Management Plan or CNMP with an AEM Certified Planner;
    - an AEM Certified Planner must be included in SW4 as District staff or as a consultant associated with the project to certify implementation of NRCS 590-based nutrient applications based on their review of farm records;
    - if awarded, the farmer must agree to verify/document that the required equipment or services have been acquired and to supply application records, including field name, application date, application method, acres applied with the method, material applied, and rate applied (in accordance with their CNMP); and
    - use one of the three cost-share options for manure injection, manure incorporation, or precision nutrient application projects listed, below.

    Option 1: Flat Rates per Acre for New, Specific Nutrient Management Application Activities

    Districts shall use up to the 80% state cost share rates listed below based on 2025 EQIP rates for NRCS 590 manure injection, manure incorporation within 24 hours, or precision nutrient application equipment purchases and activities. Such proposals should use the SW3 to document the Nutrient Management System – Cultural, the acres of NRCS 590, and the total state share and match based on acres proposed and the flat rate table, below. The bottom of the SW6 should be used to describe the equipment to be acquired through the project, but equipment costs should not be entered in the top table (Other Direct Expenses) to avoid doubling the project cost on the SW2. The Flat Rate Certification forms within the State Committee's Procurement Record shall be used for procurement and closeout.

Eligible 590 Nutrient Management Activity	80% State Share	20% Match
590 Manure Incorporation (within 24hrs)	$61.60/acre	$15.40/acre
590 Manure Injection	$198.40/acre	$49.60/acre
590 Precision Nutrient Application	$87.20/acre	$21.80/acre

Option 2: Manure and Fertilizer Application Equipment Purchase

Manure and fertilizer application equipment for NRCS 590 manure injection, manure incorporation, or precision nutrient application is eligible for up to 80% state cost share if the equipment is designed and utilized to implement and further improve the management of rates, source, placement, and timing of plant nutrients and soil amendments while reducing environmental impacts. An example of an eligible expense would be equipment that incorporates or injects manure, and the improved utilization of those nutrients results in a reduction of synthetic fertilizer inputs for those crops, according to all aspects of the farm's Nutrient Management Plan. Equipment and sensor technology, such as flow meters, that measures the flow of manure and overall application rates, are eligible for cost share when implementing this practice. The estimated costs of the equipment, distributed across state and match categories, should be budgeted and detailed under Other Direct Expenses on the SW-6. The SW-3 should be used to solely document the Nutrient Management System – Cultural and the acres of NRCS 590 to avoid doubling the project cost on the SW2. The farmer's implementation of the NRCS 590 application activity using the rates above and time by the AEM Certified Planner to update the 590 plan or CNMP may only be used as match on the SW-3.

Option 3: Custom Applicator Services

Reimbursements for custom applicator services are eligible for up to 80% state cost share for NRCS 590 manure injection, manure incorporation, or precision nutrient application that will result in a reduction in fertilizer application relative to current management. Costs should be listed under Other Direct Expenses on the SW6. The SW-3 should be used to solely document the Nutrient Management System – Cultural and the acres of NRCS 590 to avoid doubling the project cost on the SW-2. The farmer's implementation of the NRCS 590 application activity using the rates above and time by the AEM Certified Planner to update the 590 plan or CNMP may only be used as match on the SW-3. The service should be clearly discussed in the narrative.

- **Forage and Grain Yield Monitors**
    - Forage or grain yield monitor systems with GPS, mass flow meter, and dry matter sensing capabilities that improve nutrient management planning and implementation are eligible for cost share. This technology is beneficial for adaptation, resilience, soil health, and reductions in N2O emissions. This equipment and technology supports high, field specific level of nutrient management.
        - Pre-requisites - eligible farms must have:
            - A current, implemented NRCS 590 Nutrient Management Plan or CNMP maintained annually with an AEM Certified Planner.
            - A fully operable and functioning forage harvester / chopper or combine to be retrofitted.
            - A way to calibrate yield monitors multiple times per harvest season by recording load weights (e.g., access to drive-over scales, a truck with load cells, gravity wagons with load cells)
            - Interest in working with their planner to update their NMP/CNMP annually based on their field specific data (e.g., interested in measuring and managing through the Adaptive Management approach:

              http://nmsp.cals.cornell.edu/publications/files/AdaptiveManagementGuidelines.pdf)
        - Farms would collect:
            - Evidence/records of proper installation and calibration (e.g., operation and maintenance).
            - Yield data recorded as digital, field specific yield records
                - At a minimum for corn silage and corn grain acres; farmers may also choose to monitor yields and assess management on acres harvested through the chopper for haylage.
        - System components:
            - Mass flow and Dry Matter (DM) sensors
            - Computing systems in cab
            - Software
            - Subscriptions
            - GPS
        - Access would be required to permanently installed scales to calibrate, either on-farm or locally available (e.g., neighboring farm, gravel quarry, CO-OP).
            - Calibration truck with load cell may work (note - our portable weight scale package will not work for this application).
            - Need to calibrate any time there's a major change (BMR to conventional, major moisture shifts).

        - Really need to do this a few/multiple times during COS harvest season.
    - Funding for technical assistance from consultant/planner as part of project budget.
        - NMP updates, calibration assistance, data interpretation, etc.
    - Farms are encouraged to work with NMSP through the On Farm Research Program (helps the farm and other farmers across the State)
        - http://nmsp.cals.cornell.edu/NYOnFarmResearchPartnership/GettingMost_FarmResearch.html

- **Adaptive Management and Digital Technology Tools**
    - The use of digital technologies, data collection and analysis to better quantify benefits, and adaptive management tools may be proposed as part of a soil health project. This may also include the use of a crop consultant who would be listed as Contractual Services on the SW-2 and included on the SW-4 with Personnel. Projects including the use of consultants and digital tools would be expected to share results of lessons learned through proposed objectives.

Soil Health Policy

BMPs listed in the Soil Health Policy are eligible for reimbursement on a per unit basis. Contingency funding is not applicable to BMPs reimbursed on a per unit basis.

Soil Health practices will be contracted for a four-year term. Farmers must be prepared to implement the practice for at least three seasons.

Proposed projects must be developed from an appropriate AEM Tier 3A or 3B plan (or equivalent). Farms must have participated in AEM Tier 3 (AEM 3A Cover Crop Tool through Part 1, AEM 3A Cropland Conservation Plan, AEM 3A Nutrient Management Plan, AEM 3B CNMP, or equivalent) prior to application to the CRF Program for Track 3.

Once the project is awarded, Parts 2 and 3 of the AEM Tier 3 Cover Crop Tool (or equivalent as part of an existing plan) must be completed each year of the Contract. The Annual Cover Crop Plan/Design (Part 2) shall be completed annually with producers in time to provide field-by-field recommendations to properly establish the cover crops. The Annual Cover Crop Evaluation (Part 3) shall be completed with the producer after establishment, but before termination of the cover crop.

Soil Health Testing

To further support long-term adoption of soil health practices, it is encouraged that soil health and manure/compost testing be performed before and after practice implementation to support measurement, monitoring, reporting, and verification (MMRV) of practice systems. A state rate has been included for soil and manure testing services in the Soil Health Policy. The cost of soil health testing can be 100% cost shared.

Soil Health Outreach

Alongside implementation projects, outreach components are encouraged and eligible for 100% cost-share. Outreach to underserved farm communities is strongly encouraged. These efforts can be listed under Other Direct Expenses. The outreach event/activity should be clearly discussed in the narrative and the costs should be itemized on the SW-6.

Economic Analysis

Projects that include an economic analysis to aid the farmer in long-term adoption may include this cost as match to increase the overall request. Findings of the analysis could also be included in an outreach event for farm-to-farm education. Outreach is eligible at 100% cost-share.

Pollinator Protection

The State Committee strongly encourages applicants to enhance on-farm biodiversity through utilizing plant species (in applicable management practices) that support pollinator habitat and help meet the goals identified in the NYS Pollinator Protection Plan (Update 2022).

GHG Reduction Estimation

An estimation of the reduction in GHG emissions must be calculated using USDA-NRCS COMET-Planner. The COMET-Planner estimate should be used for applicable practices to answer application questions relating to GHG reduction estimates. Other tools may be used with a description justifying its use.

The calculator tool is available at:

COMET-Planner - http://comet-planner.com/

MMRV

Projects implementing soil health systems will be required to conduct or participate in some measurement, monitoring, reporting, and verification of GHG reduction.

Appendix D: Track 4 Guidance Document – Agricultural Forestry Management

Goal of Track 4:

To support healthy productive forests as well as afforestation on currently unforested lands on farms both for the purpose of carbon sequestration and to promote sustainable and resilient agriculture and forestry.

Agricultural Forestry Management Description

Healthy, well-managed forests help to protect soil and water resources, reduce the impact of invasive species, and can provide valuable economic benefit to a farm operation. Well-planned, productive uses of healthy forests can provide multiple benefits to the farm and community. These benefits go beyond the trees and include the total forest resource. Forestland can be used in a variety of ways including the production of crops, recreation, wildlife habitat, and carbon sequestration.

Greenhouse Gas Mitigation

Maximizing the carbon sequestration and storage potential in the agricultural forestlands is a key strategy for achieving the Climate Act targets of net zero emissions across all sectors of the economy by 2050. Emissions reductions beyond 85% of 1990 statewide levels can be achieved through approximately 60 MMT CO_2 net annual sequestration in the forestry and agricultural sectors and related land use practices (Chapter 19. Land Use).

Adaptation

Management of New York's forests to promote tree health, recreation, wildlife habitat, and wood products, among other reasons, also has many implications for long-term carbon storage and sequestration. The DEC and USDA-NRCS provide BMPs and guidance to foresters and work closely with landowners to increase carbon benefits and climate resilience.

Harvesting Restrictions

Harvesting should only be done to achieve desired forest conditions for the purpose of carbon sequestration or to obtain ecosystem services.

Reforestation after a harvest or disturbance is **not** eligible, unless related to a forest stand health issue. If a landowner has completed a harvest within the proposed project area in the last **five (5)** years, they are not eligible for Track 4 funding.

Harvesting related to forest stand health issues such as addressing invasive forest pests or diseases would be eligible for a Track 4 project.

Additionally, high grading to selectively remove the highest-grade timber for harvesting is not eligible under this program.

Cost-Share

Funds are to provide cost share reimbursement payments for implementation of approved forestry practices that enhance tree regeneration within a farm's existing forestland and/or plant and establish trees on their currently unforested land.

Forestry systems are eligible for up to 80% state cost-share (20% or more landowner or local share). Projects will receive state funds up to 80% of the costs for eligible BMPs to increase carbon sequestration and improve natural resource conservation in existing forestlands.

In addition to conventionally budgeted forestry projects, Track 4 includes a per acre rate for planting containerized stock and a per acre rate for planting bare root stock. The per acre rates provide 100% cost-share for tree planting on currently unforested land. Match is not required on the per acre rate for such afforestation projects.

Per Acre Rate for Tree Planting on Currently Unforested Land

To incentivize afforestation and tree establishment for carbon sequestration purposes, a per acre tree planting rate is being offered for Track 4 Forestry Management Projects only. The per acre rates are intended for open lands where the predominant mode of afforestation is through tree planting (i.e., artificial forest regeneration) with the primary goal of carbon sequestration. Any other tree planting projects may be eligible in Track 4, but on a reimbursement basis (e.g., tree planting within existing forests, nut orchards). The per acre planting rates include the cost for plant material (based on average containerized stock or bare root), planting, seedling protection, contingency costs, and a landowner incentive added-on. Site preparation costs would be budgeted on a site-specific basis, as would costs for post-planting monitoring and maintenance activities for the length of the contract. Survivability of the trees is important and should be addressed in the proposal. Seedling survival must be 70% at the end of 3-years or additional planting may be necessary. The AEM Base Program Tier 4 Track can be used after contract close out to support long-term maintenance and survivability.

To support successful, long-term tree establishment through Track 4 tree planting projects, the following should be followed when using the per acre rates:

- species selection must be based on a site assessment/plan and farmer goals; species diversity is encouraged where appropriate;
- a minimum of 500 trees per acre must be planted and depending upon species and landowner goals, additional trees or shrubs may be established per acre;
- apply supporting practices and treatments as necessary to protect establishing trees and shrubs and enhance survivability; and
- all stock should be of good quality and suited to the method of planting.

Per Acre Planting Rate – Track 4 projects only

- **Per Acre Planting Rate - containerized stock = $6,000/acre**
    - based on $4,000/acre estimated tree planting cost plus a $2,000/acre incentive

- **Per Acre Planting Rate - bare root stock = $4,500/acre**
    - based on $2,500/acre estimated tree planting cost plus a $2,000/acre incentive

Budgeting Note

The per acre planting rate should be used as a single rate under the state column on the SW-3 budget (i.e., 100% state cost-share for that project component). Additional practices should be budgeted up to 80% state cost-share (20% or more landowner or local share) on a reimbursement basis. **The overall project's cost-share percentage does not have to be 80% / 20% for Track 4 projects but shall not exceed 100%.** Projects should consider the cost effectiveness of the proposed budget as applications are scored on criteria in this category.

SW-3 for per acre rate tree planting projects should include:

- Tree/Shrub Site Preparation (NRCS 490) – up to 80% state cost-share (20% or more landowner or local share) reimbursement
- Per Acre Planting Rate using the NRCS 612 Tree/Shrub Establishment Standard
    - Containerized stock: $6,000/acre state share
    - Bare root stock: $4,500/acre state share

SW-4 should include:

- Time for monitoring and maintenance activities

Planning Requirements

Projects will have a range of planning requirements. The goal of the project can help predetermine the planning level. Projects may need to have a forest management plan, an AEM Tier 3A Plan, or another plan that helps ensure that the project is successful. Projects with formal plans in place at application are encouraged to describe the planning basis for the project, but a formal plan is not required at application. If awarded, plans are expected to be developed prior to project implementation. Foresters are required in scenarios:

- where natural regeneration of desired tree species is the predominant or sole method of afforestation; or
- where silvicultural or forestry practices are proposed to be implemented on existing forestlands.

Forester Description

For the purposes of this system, a forester is defined as an individual possessing one or both of the options below.

<u>Option 1 – Certification</u>

- Society of American Foresters (SAF) Certified Forester; or
- NRCS Technical Service Provider for applicable Forest Management Planning and Implementation Practices.

Option 2 – Combination of Education and Experience

A. An associate degree in forestry from an SAF-accredited degree program and at least 4 years of forestry experience or a baccalaureate degree in forestry from an SAF-accredited degree program and 2 years of forestry experience. Accredited associate and baccalaureate degree programs from the SAF include forestry programs (e.g., Paul Smiths and SUNY-ESF), forest technology programs (e.g., Paul Smiths and SUNY-ESF Ranger School), and some natural resources management degree programs (e.g., SUNY ESF). See https://www.eforester.org/Main/Certification_Education/Accreditation/Main/Accreditation/Accreditation_Home.aspx for a list of accredited associate and baccalaureate degree programs from the SAF. The individual's education and experience shall be determined locally per the criteria listed above for Option 2A.

or

B. An earned degree at the associate or baccalaureate level in forestry or related natural resources from a non SAF-accredited degree program where the individual candidate has a minimum of 56 semester credit hours as specified in the forestry-related coursework areas listed on the SAF website (found, here: https://www.eforester.org/Main/Certification/Related_Course_Work.aspx) and at least 4 years of forestry experience with an associate degree and 2 years of forestry experience with a baccalaureate degree. Examples of "related natural resources" include, but are not limited to, environmental studies, wildlife management, range management, or ecology. The individual's education and experience shall be determined locally per the criteria listed above for Option 2B.

Further guidance on commonly used NRCS conservation practice standards for forestry and afforestation is provided in the table, below.

BMP	**NRCS CPS #**	**Forester Requirements***
Tree/Shrub Site Preparation	490	No if using artificial regeneration (tree planting); Yes, if predominately using natural regeneration
Tree/Shrub Establishment	612	No if using artificial regeneration (tree planting); Yes, if predominately using natural regeneration
Forest Farming (Multi-Story Cropping)	379	No if using artificial regeneration (tree planting); Yes, if predominately using natural regeneration
Forest Stand Improvement	666	Yes
Contour Orchard and Other Perennial Crops	331	No, but requires a CCA

Hedgerow Planting	422	No
Windbreak-Shelterbelt Establishment and Renovation	380	No
Irrigation System, Microirrigation	441	No
Forest Trails and Landings	655	No if for addressing resource concerns with existing trails and landings; Yes if establishing new networks of trails within a forest
Stream Crossing	578	No, but requires a PE
Conservation Cover	327	No
Critical Area Planting	342	No
Pasture and Hay Planting	512	No, but requires a CCA
Access Road	560	No, but requires a PE
Trails and Walkways	575	No
Access Control	472	No
Fence	382	No
Structure for Water Control	587	No, but requires a PE
Water & Sediment Control Basin	638	No
Filter Strip	393	No
Grassed Waterway	412	No

Lined Waterway or Outlet	468	No, but requires a PE
Brush Management	314	No if using artificial regeneration (tree planting); Yes, if predominately using natural regeneration
Herbaceous Weed Treatment	315	No if using artificial regeneration (tree planting); Yes, if predominately using natural regeneration
Pest Management Conservation System	595	No

See also the Forestry/Agroforestry System in the Agricultural BMP Systems Catalogue.

Eligible Practice Systems

Projects including the Forestry/Agroforestry System from the Ag BMP Systems Catalogue are eligible within Track 4. The table, above, lists component practices commonly used for forestry within existing forests on farms as well as afforestation projects on currently unforested lands on farms. It's intended as a guide and not an exhaustive list. If, however, an applicant chooses systems or components not identified in the catalogue, the application must include detailed explanation in the narrative section.

Additional, complementary systems from the Catalogue may be included with the Forestry/Agroforestry System to further enhance natural resource conservation and carbon sequestration depending on the resource concerns, farmer goals, and priority alternatives from the conservation plan.

Note, Track 4 projects may be applied to existing forest lands on farms as well as cropland, pasture being converted to forest land (without livestock), or idle lands on farms. This Track is currently designed for lands where forestry or agroforestry management does not include integration with livestock, due to the complexity of silvopasture management. Tree planting in or adjacent to existing pastures to enhance the Prescribed Rotational Grazing System is only eligible in Track 3. Practices such as Fence may be used to exclude livestock and wildlife from the land proposed for funding from this track.

GHG Reduction Estimation

An estimation of the reduction in GHG emissions must be calculated using USDA-NRCS COMET-Planner. The COMET-Planner estimate should be used for applicable practices to answer application questions relating to GHG reduction estimates. Other tools may be used with a description justifying its use.

The calculator tool is available at:

COMET-Planner - http://comet-planner.com/

District and Farm Operator Agreements

The District and Farm Operator Agreements for afforestation projects should include a clause to support long-term maintenance of the implemented practices.

Appendix E: Proposal Rating Criteria

TRACK 1: Livestock Management: Alternative Waste Management and Precision Feed Management

The goal is to reduce methane emissions from livestock operations including manure management through the collection and destruction of methane or methane avoidance and the reduction of methane from enteric fermentation. Projects must demonstrate a reduction or avoidance in methane emissions. For example, agricultural waste storage cover and flare systems have the capacity to immediately impact both the GHG emissions from the farm and the farm's resiliency to major precipitation events and are the **priority practice for methane mitigation in Track 1.**

1. **GHG Emission Reduction and Resiliency** (30 points)
    - The proposal clearly describes the practices being implemented and how those practices relate to the goals of Track 1.
    - The proposal describes how current manure management practices produce methane through the anaerobic decomposition of manure volatile solids stored as a predominately liquid anaerobic environment and how proposed BMPs will change current conditions.
    - The proposal describes how proposed alternative, or feed management practices will decrease the farms GHG emissions and increase the farms efficiency.
    - The proposal clearly describes the tools and/or equipment being utilized.
    - Project clearly demonstrates capacity to decrease GHG emissions. Extent of GHG emission savings through:
        - Methane destruction potential (based on waste volume proposed to be covered and type of storage for cover and capture).
        - Capacity of the flare to combust methane when produced. Projects that include attributes to ensure flare efficiency (auto-ignition, ignition powered by battery/solar or direct connection to electrical service, wind shield, remote data collection, etc.) will score higher.
        - For non-cover and flare/capture projects provide net GHG emission reductions calculated by subtracting estimated post-project GHG emissions from the baseline scenario emissions associated with current manure management activities. Clearly describe how additional efficiencies will be realized through the proposed Precision Feed Management changes.
    - Demonstrated commitment of producer to utilize low emission, carbon sink, or renewable energy methods on other areas of the farm.
    - Commitment by producer and District to engage in regular testing and/or recording to be able to demonstrate GHG emission savings as a result of practice systems implemented.

- Extent/capacity of project to increase farm resiliency through demonstration of current risks, needs, and climate change concerns:
    - Farms with a high risk of their manure storage overtopping or applying manure in adverse conditions will score higher than farms with low risks.
- Management of water excluded from the storage when installing a cover (*i.e.*, water that falls on the cover):
    - Projects that retain and store the water excluded from the storage will score more highly than projects that convey the water away from the farm.
- Resiliency need is clearly established:
    - Proposal clearly demonstrates the actual (previous experience) and potential impacts of adverse weather.
    - Maps of local hydrology, farm's location within floodplain/watershed are provided and demonstrate high risk of adverse weather to the farm and/or surrounding community.
    - Local emergency management plans identify the farm/farm's region as high risk.
- Demonstrated commitment of producer to emergency management planning and preparations.
- Co-benefits of BMP being implemented are described if applicable.
    - Linkages to soil conservation and water quality are also identified in the project.
    - Compost production (dry tons), compost application area (acres to be treated).
    - Fossil fuel reductions, fuel, and energy cost savings.

2. **Adequate Scope of Work** (10 points)

- Feasibility of the project is clearly demonstrated.
    - Project deliverables are clearly defined and consistent with program objectives.
    - There is demonstrated experience and ability of the Project Sponsor and project staff to undertake the proposed activity.
    - Project proposal is comprehensive, coordinated and integrated and uses an interdisciplinary team of public and/or private sector professionals to maximize the ability to implement BMPs.
    - Project proposal includes engineering/technical services commensurate with BMP deliverables.
- Project implements best management practices.
    - Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan and/or Whole Farm Plan clearly addresses the need for proposed systems.
    - The shovel-readiness of the project is described.

- 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 that could encourage replication on nearby farms, or the farm operator commits to using their farm operation as a "demonstration project" and the District commits to conducting educational programming regarding Climate Resilient Farming.

3. **Budgeting and Cost Effectiveness** (10 points)

- Farm operator support is documented.
  - Farm operator provides a sufficient match in cash or in-kind services.
  - Projects that reflect needs due to farm expansion (as opposed to solely due to the new realities of a changing climate) include a farm operator contribution greater than required.
- Cost effectiveness of the project is demonstrated.
  - BMPs to be implemented are cost effective relative to the expected mitigation/adaptation benefit.
  - The project contains additional matching funds above the minimum required or leverages additional funding (e.g., local, EQIP, CREP, CRP, etc.), especially if requesting a substantial amount of state grant funds.
  - The project will be evaluated to ensure that proper operation and maintenance will be conducted for continuation of the project's stated benefits.
  - The budget accounts for unexpected costs.
    - Project demonstrates capacity to address cost overruns and/or unexpected costs in order to ensure project completion.

Appendix E: Proposal Rating Criteria

TRACK 2: Adaptation and Resiliency

Enhance climate resiliency and adaptive capacity of the farm operation. In response to climate change impacts and projections, adaptation actions can be taken to reduce risks and vulnerabilities, build resilience, and maintain productivity. Track 2 will support projects that prepare farms for and react to the impacts of extreme weather events, seasonal shifts, disturbances, or stressors, etc.

Water management projects remain a priority of Track 2. Water management is an effort to prepare agricultural producers for two anticipated and experienced impacts of climate change: flood events and drought. Improved water management on farms through the implementation of conservation systems can significantly enhance a farm's resiliency to the impacts of climate change, including both drought and flood. Some conservation systems, such as transferring land to perennial production or forest buffer, can also create beneficial carbon sinks.

1. **GHG Emission Reduction and Resiliency** (30 points)
    - The proposal clearly describes the practices being implemented and how those practices relate to the goals of Track 2.
    - Potential of the project to decrease GHG emissions and increase carbon sinks.
        - Extent of GHG emission savings are estimated.
        - Acres of annual cropland converted to woody perennial cropland or riparian buffer.
        - Acres of annual cropland converted to herbaceous perennial cropland or riparian buffer.
            - Note: Woody perennials sequester more carbon than herbaceous perennials, and therefore will be ranked higher.
        - Extent of fuel savings, if any, through less tillage, converted fields, etc.
        - Extent of improved nitrogen management (less nitrous oxide released), if any.
        - Demonstrated commitment of producer to utilize low emission, carbon sink, or renewable energy methods on other areas of the farm.
        - Commitment by producer and District to engage in regular testing and/or recording to be able to demonstrate GHG emission savings because of practice systems implemented.
    - Project clearly demonstrates opportunity to increase farm resiliency to a changing climate.
        - Climate vulnerabilities and their impact to the farm are clearly identified.
        - Strategies to increase resilience, reduce risk, and increase the ability of the farm to cope with changing conditions are outlined.
    - The proposal clearly describes the tools and/or equipment being utilized.

- Degree that multiple BMP systems are assembled across land uses as part of a broader water management strategy to manage farms and fields as part of a larger landscape.
    - Proposals which include multiple BMP systems (e.g., Irrigation Water Management Systems for wetland or pond creation, resizing culverts and channels in Erosion and Sediment Control Systems to better meet today's climate's needs, and Stream and Shoreline Management Systems to clear debris from a stream) will score more highly than proposals which focus on only one area of need.
    - Green Infrastructure practices being proposed are clearly described and reference the NYS Stormwater Manual.
- Practice system will buffer against hydrologic variability and increase infiltration after extreme precipitation events, including calculating storm runoff volumes, peak rates of discharge, and storage volumes for floodwater reservoirs.
- Infrastructure is altered to match new and expected weather conditions. Consideration is given to designing some water management BMPs to a higher storm interval.
    - Acres of area treated (catchment basin), volume of water managed.
    - Size of storage and amount of freeboard, if applicable.
    - Size of conveyances and level of storm in the design, if applicable.
    - Redundancies are added as necessary to ensure resiliency.
- Risk and long-term impacts of extreme weather are reduced through improved infrastructure to accommodate more intense precipitation events.
- Extent of risk to farm and local area posed by an untreated stream in the event of a severe storm, if applicable.
- Resiliency need is clearly established:
    - Proposal clearly demonstrates the potential impacts of adverse weather, including through previous experiences.
    - Maps of local hydrology, farm's location within floodplain/watershed are provided and demonstrate high risk of adverse weather to the farm and/or surrounding community.
    - Local emergency management plans identify the farm/farm's region as high risk.
- Demonstrated commitment of producer to emergency management planning and preparations.
- Commitment by producer and District to record results in event of adverse weather.
- Beneficial Electrification Projects demonstrates a reduction in GHG emissions or enhanced energy conservation based on a practice that the equipment would replace. For example, purchase and use of a frost fan that would eliminate the use of a helicopter or burning of hay bales for frost protection.
- Co-benefits of BMP being implemented are described.

- Linkages to soil conservation and water quality are also identified in the project.
- Projects increasing on-farm biodiversity through pollinator protection should score higher.

2. **Adequate Scope of Work** (10 points)
   - Feasibility of the project is clearly demonstrated.
     - Project deliverables are clearly defined and consistent with program objectives.
     - Project proposal is comprehensive, coordinated and integrated and uses an interdisciplinary team of public and/or private sector professionals to maximize the ability to implement BMPs.
     - Project proposal includes engineering/technical services commensurate with BMP deliverables.
     - There is demonstrated experience and ability of the Project Sponsor and project staff to undertake the proposed activity.
   - Project implements best management practices.
     - A higher level of planning than what is required has been completed (e.g., a complete farmstead plan, field level Resource Management System, Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan, Whole Farm Plan).
     - The shovel-readiness of the project is described.
     - 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 that could encourage replication on nearby farms, or the farm operator commits to using their farm operation as a "demonstration project" and the District commits to conducting educational programming regarding Climate Resilient Farming.

3. **Budgeting and Cost Effectiveness** (10 points)
   - Farm operator support is documented.
     - Farm operator provides a sufficient match in cash or in-kind services.
     - Projects that reflect needs due to farm expansion (as opposed to solely due to the new realities of a changing climate) include a farm operator contribution greater than required.
   - Cost effectiveness of the project is demonstrated.
     - BMPs to be implemented are cost effective relative to the expected mitigation/adaptation benefit.
     - The project contains additional matching funds above the minimum required or leverages additional funding (e.g., local, EQIP, CREP, CRP, EPA 319, etc.), especially if requesting a substantial amount of state grant funds.
     - The project will be evaluated to ensure that proper operation and maintenance will be conducted for the continuation of the project's stated benefits.
     - The budget accounts for unexpected costs.
       - Project demonstrates capacity to address cost overruns and/or unexpected costs in order to ensure project completion.

Appendix E: Proposal Rating Criteria

TRACK 3: Healthy Soils NY

To improve soil health while reducing nitrous oxide and increasing carbon sequestration. Improved soil health on farms can significantly enhance a farm's resiliency to the impacts of climate change, including benefits during times of drought, wet weather, as well as optimal growing conditions. Soil health practices can also create carbon sinks, increase water holding capacity and improve recycling of nitrogen by crops, thereby mitigating GHG emissions.

1. **GHG Emission Reduction and Resiliency** (30 points)
    - The proposal clearly describes the practices being implemented and how those practices relate to the goals of Track 3.
    - GHG emission savings are estimated.
    - Extent of soil carbon sequestration potential of cropland conservation systems, for example, systems involving year-round cover will be ranked higher. COMET Planner estimates will also be used in comparing projects.
    - Quantification of soil carbon is addressed through soil testing.
    - Acres of annual cropland converted to cropland conservation systems, including reduced tillage, crop rotations involving conserving higher residue crops, organic amendments, cover crops, riparian forest buffer, etc.
    - Acres of annual cropland converted to perennial cropland or pasture.
    - Extent of fuel savings, if any, through less tillage, converted fields, etc.
    - Extent of improved nitrogen management (less nitrous oxide released), if any.
        - Describe how improved efficiency is being reached and quantified.
        - Provide details on equipment, sensor technology, monitors, services, and tools being used and/or proposed to provide additional efficiencies/GHG reductions.
        - Describe co-benefits of improved water quality, fuel savings, cost savings (aiding long-term adoption).
    - Demonstrated commitment of producer to utilize low emission, carbon sink, or renewable energy methods on other areas of the farm.
    - Commitment by producer and District to engage in regular testing and/or recording to be able to demonstrate GHG emission savings as a result of practice systems implemented.
    - Project clearly demonstrates opportunity to increase farm resiliency to a changing climate.
    - Acres of annual cropland converted to cropland conservation systems, including reduced tillage, crop rotations involving conserving higher residue crops, organic amendments, cover crops, riparian forest buffer etc.
    - Extent of water holding capacity improvements, as estimated by RUSLE2.

- Extent of reductions in soil erosion, as estimated by RUSLE2.
- The proposal clearly describes the tools and/or equipment being utilized.
    - Provides details on use of digital technologies, data collection, and analysis to better quantify benefits of proposed practices.
    - Manure and fertilizer application equipment should meet the prerequisites for planning and provide details on how the project will provide additional efficiencies from the current management.
    - Forage and grain yield monitors being proposed meet the pre-requisites set in the RFP and describe how they plan to collect records of installation and calibration and provide yield data as part of the project.
    - Provides details on weather monitoring and soil moisture systems proposed and what practices will be implemented.
- Agroforestry systems should clearly describe how they are incorporating agriculture with forests/trees. This practice system is highly encouraged.
- Resiliency need is clearly established:
    - Proposal clearly demonstrates the potential impacts of adverse weather, including through previous experiences.
    - Maps of local hydrology, farm's location within flood plain/watershed are provided and demonstrate high risk of adverse weather to the farm and/or surrounding community.
    - Local emergency management plans identify the farm/farm's region as high risk.
- Demonstrated commitment of producer to emergency management planning and preparations.
- Commitment by producer and District to record results in event of adverse weather.
- Projects proposing outreach and education should clearly describe how they will incorporate this into the overall project with the goal to aid farmers in long-term adoption. Projects including outreach and education are encouraged.
- Co-benefits of BMP being implemented are described.
    - Linkages to soil conservation and water quality are also identified in the project.
    - Projects increasing on-farm biodiversity through pollinator protection should score higher.

2. **Adequate Scope of Work** (10 points)
    - Feasibility of the project is clearly demonstrated.
        - Project deliverables are clearly defined and consistent with program objectives.
        - Project proposal is comprehensive, coordinated and integrated and uses an interdisciplinary team of public and/or private sector professionals to maximize the ability to implement BMPs.

- Project proposal includes engineering/technical services commensurate with BMP deliverables.
- There is demonstrated experience and ability of the sponsor and project staff to undertake the proposed activity.

- Project implements best management practices.
  - A higher level of planning than what is required has been completed, e.g. a complete farmstead plan, field level Resource Management System, Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan, Whole Farm Plan.
  - The shovel-readiness of the project is described.
  - 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 that could encourage replication on nearby farms, or the farm operator commits to using their farm operation as a "demonstration project" and the District commits to conducting educational programming regarding Climate Resilient Farming.
- Project proposal goes beyond implementation to increase adoption of soil health practices to include outreach and education for soil health, e.g., soil health workshop, cover crop signs, etc.

3. **Budgeting and Cost Effectiveness** (10 points)
   - Farm operator support is documented.
     - Farm operator provides a sufficient match in cash or in-kind services.
     - Projects that reflect needs due to farm expansion (as opposed to solely due to the new realities of a changing climate) include a farm operator contribution greater than required.
   - Cost effectiveness of the project is demonstrated.
     - BMPs to be implemented are cost effective relative to the expected mitigation/adaptation benefit.
     - The project contains additional matching funds above the minimum required or leverages additional funding (e.g. local, EQIP, CREP, CRP, EPA 319, etc.), especially if requesting a substantial amount of state grant funds.
     - The project will be evaluated to ensure that proper operation and maintenance will be conducted for continuation of the project's stated benefits.
     - The budget accounts for unexpected costs.
       - Project demonstrates capacity to address cost overruns and/or unexpected costs in order to ensure project completion.

Appendix E: Proposal Rating Criteria

TRACK 4: Agricultural Forestry Management

To support healthy productive forests as well as afforestation on currently unforested lands on farms both for the purpose of carbon sequestration and to promote sustainable and resilient agriculture and forestry.

1. GHG Emission Reduction and Resiliency (30 points)

- The proposal clearly describes the practices being implemented, how they will be implemented, and how those practices relate to the goals of Track 4.
- GHG emission savings are estimated.
- Extent of soil carbon sequestration potential of systems proposed, for example, systems involving afforestation on unforested land will be ranked higher.
- Demonstrated commitment of producer to utilize low emission, carbon sink, or renewable energy methods on other areas of the farm.
- Commitment by producer and District to engage through reporting to demonstrate GHG emission savings as a result of practice systems implemented.
- Project clearly demonstrates opportunity to increase farm resiliency to a changing climate.
- Project planning occurred in accordance with guidance outlined in the RFP.
- Harvesting restrictions are followed according to the RFP.
- Resiliency need is clearly established:
    - Proposal clearly demonstrates the potential impacts of adverse weather, including through previous experiences.
    - Maps of project location, farm's location within flood plain/watershed are provided and demonstrate potential to create a carbon sink.
- Co-benefits of BMP being implemented are described.
    - Linkages to soil conservation and water quality are also identified in the project.
    - Projects increasing on-farm biodiversity through pollinator protection should score higher.

2. Adequate Scope of Work (10 points)

- Feasibility of the project is clearly demonstrated.
    - Project deliverables are clearly defined and consistent with program objectives.
    - Project proposal is comprehensive, coordinated and integrated and uses an interdisciplinary team of public and/or private sector professionals to maximize the ability to implement BMPs.
    - Project proposal includes engineering/technical services commensurate with BMP deliverables.

- There is demonstrated experience and ability of the sponsor and project staff to undertake the proposed activity.

- Project implements best management practices.
  - A higher level of planning than what is required has been completed, e.g., a complete farmstead plan, field level Resource Management System, Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan, Whole Farm Plan.
  - The shovel-readiness of the project is described.
  - 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 that could encourage replication on nearby farms, or the farm operator commits to using their farm operation as a "demonstration project" and the District commits to conducting educational programming regarding Climate Resilient Farming.

3. Budgeting and Cost Effectiveness (10 points)

- Farm operator support is documented.
  - Farm operator provides a sufficient match in cash or in-kind services.
  - Projects that reflect needs due to farm expansion (as opposed to solely due to the new realities of a changing climate) include a farm operator contribution greater than required.
- Cost effectiveness of the project is demonstrated.
  - BMPs to be implemented are cost effective relative to the expected mitigation/adaptation benefit.
  - Track 4 projects including the per acre planting rate describe how the rate will be incorporated into their project budgets.
  - The project contains additional matching funds above the minimum required or leverages additional funding (e.g., local, EQIP, CREP, CRP, EPA 319, etc.), especially if requesting a substantial amount of state grant funds.
  - The project will be evaluated to ensure that proper operation and maintenance will be conducted for continuation of the project's stated benefits.
  - The budget accounts for unexpected costs.
    - Project demonstrates capacity to address cost overruns and/or unexpected costs in order to ensure project completion.