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## State Water Resources Control Board

**TO:** Interested Parties

**FROM:** STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD  
DIVISION OF WATER QUALITY

**DATE:** June 24, 2014

**SUBJECT:** NEW BAY-DELTA CRITICAL CONSERVATION AREA RCPP 2014  
FARM BILL CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has developed a new program called the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) that may be of interest to irrigated agricultural stakeholders. The RCPP promotes coordination between NRCS and its partners to deliver conservation assistance to producers and landowners. NRCS provides assistance to producers through partnership agreements and through program contracts or easement agreements.

On May 27, 2014, USDA Secretary Vilsack announced the eight Secretarial designated Critical Conservation Areas (CCA) and the Bay-Delta Watershed was chosen as a CCA of national significance [note the Bay-Delta watershed includes the whole Central Valley]. The program combines and replaces the Agricultural Watershed Enhancement Program (AWEP) and the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI) both of which were widely used in California and both of which brought needed additional funding for financial assistance on-farm. The RCPP has other unique aspects, for example the opportunity to also include easements in RCPP projects and new opportunities for Technical Assistance for partnering organizations.

Information on RCPP is at the national web site <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/programs/farbill/rcpp/> . NOT Attached is the full 46-page [announcement for program funding \(APF\) from Grants.gov](#) which is available on the web site and includes detailed information on eligibility, applications, how projects will be assessed and ranked and much more.

Other information:

1) A recent news release

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/ca/newsroom/releases/?cid=STELPRD11254531> announcing the program, and

2) A FAQ answering common questions and providing links to national resources (attached)). The national RCPP web site is <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/programs/farmbill/rcpp/>

NRCS is partnering with California Farm Bureau on workshops explaining key parts of the new Farm Bill, including RCPP. There are two workshops that will be held before the RCPP pre proposals are due on July 14th, 2014.

On **June 24th Yuba-Sutter Farm Bureau** will cohost a workshop with USDA at 9:30 a.m. at their office at 475 N. Palora Ave. Ste. A, Yuba City, CA.

On **June 25th the Fresno Farm Bureau** will hold a similar meeting at their office at 1274 W. Hedges Ave, Fresno, CA, also at 9:30 a.m.

For further information contact USDA NRCS staff Alan Forkey at (530) 792-5653 or Erik Beardsley at (530) 792-5649.