

Monarchs and Farm Bill Conservation Programs

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The 2008 and 2014 Food, Conservation and Energy Act (Farm Bill) is one of the most important single piece of federal legislation for pollinator conservation.



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The Farm Bill

- allocates over \$1 billion each year for conservation projects on private land
- establishes research priorities and potential new funding



2008 and 2014 Farm Bills

- Make pollinators a priority resource concern for every USDA land manager and conservationist.
- Encourage the inclusion of pollinators in all USDA conservation programs.



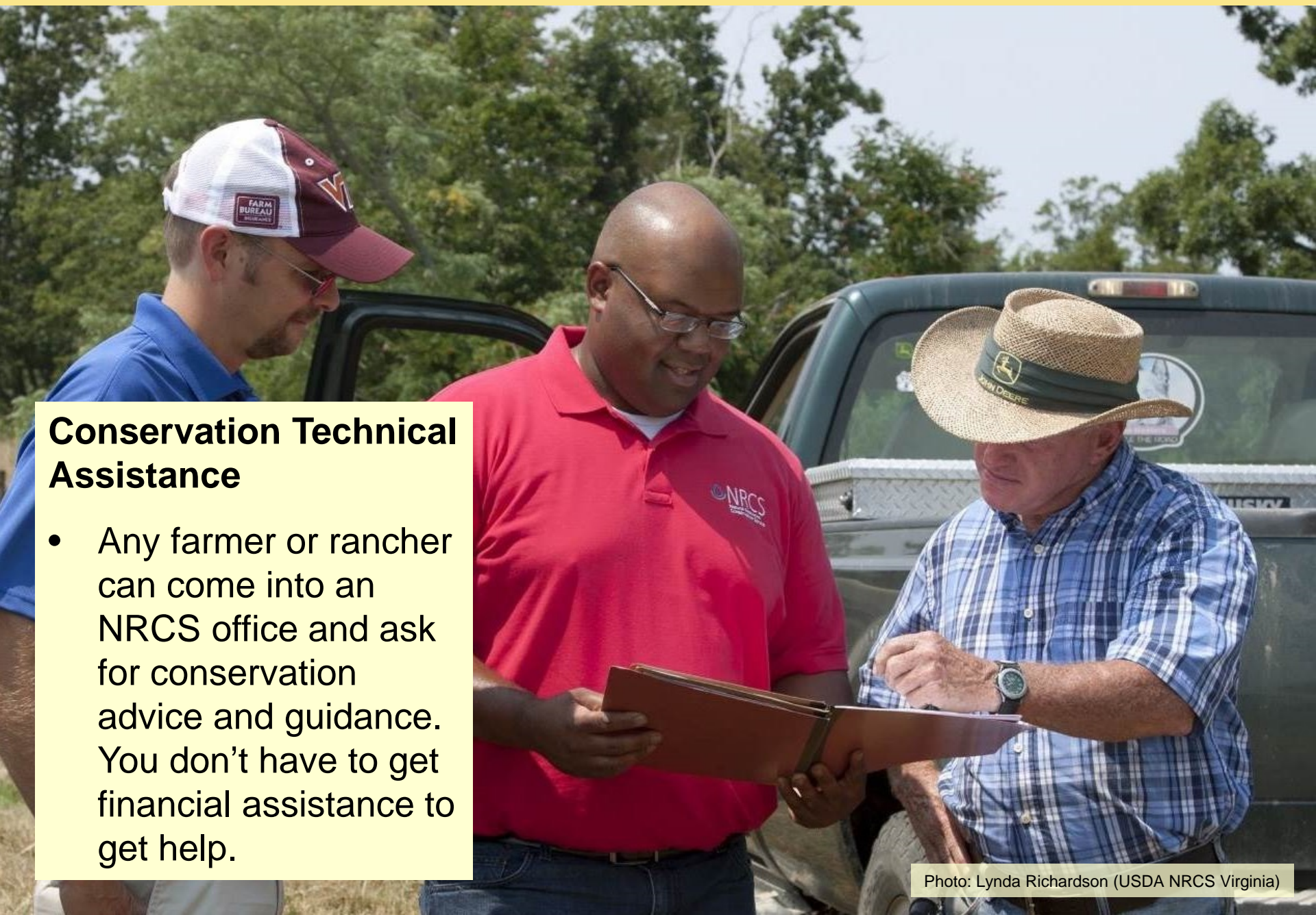
Farm Bill Conservation Programs Overview

- Administered by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Farm Service Agency (FSA)
- Farm Bill conservation programs support both **technical assistance** and/or **financial assistance** to agricultural producers



Conservation Technical Assistance

- Any farmer or rancher can come into an NRCS office and ask for conservation advice and guidance. You don't have to get financial assistance to get help.



Financial Assistance

Key Programs for Monarchs

- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (**EQIP**)
- Conservation Stewardship Program (**CSP**)
- Agricultural Easement Programs (**ACEP**)
- Conservation Reserve Program (**CRP**)

Technical Note No. 78

Using Farm Bill Programs for Pollinator Conservation
(currently being revised to reflect changes in the 2014 Farm Bill)



August 2008

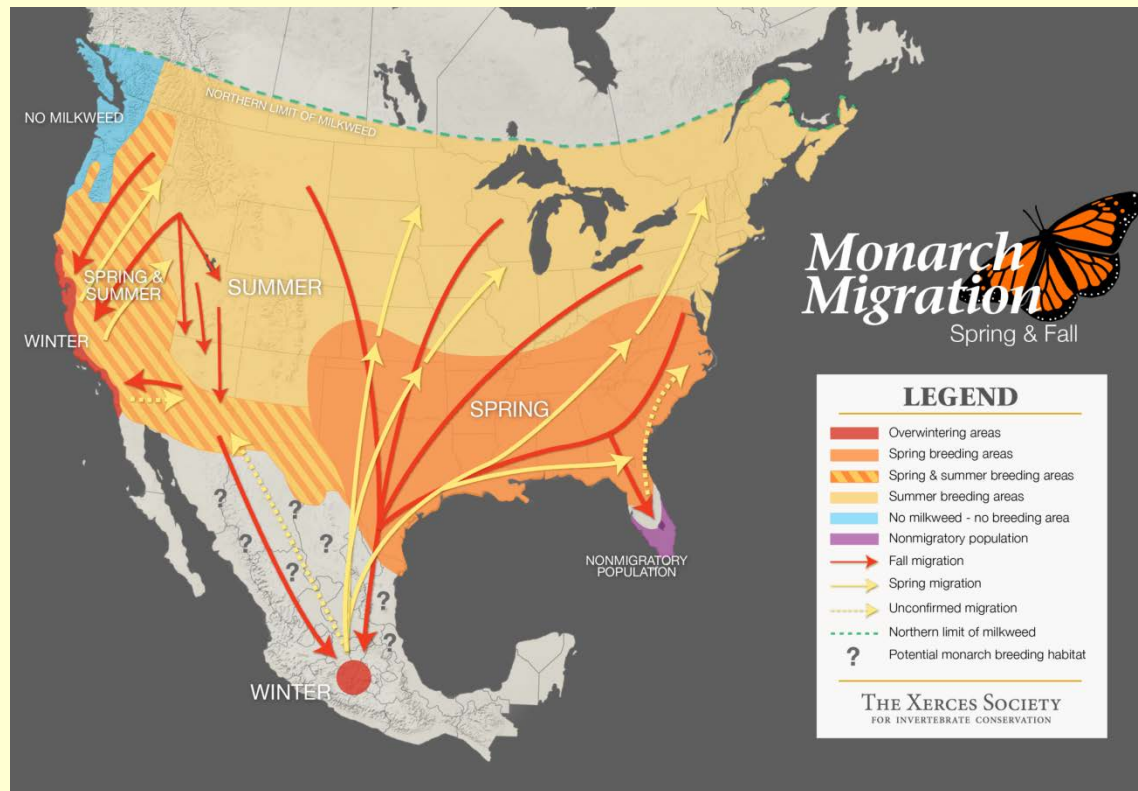
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NRCS Monarch Conservation Effort

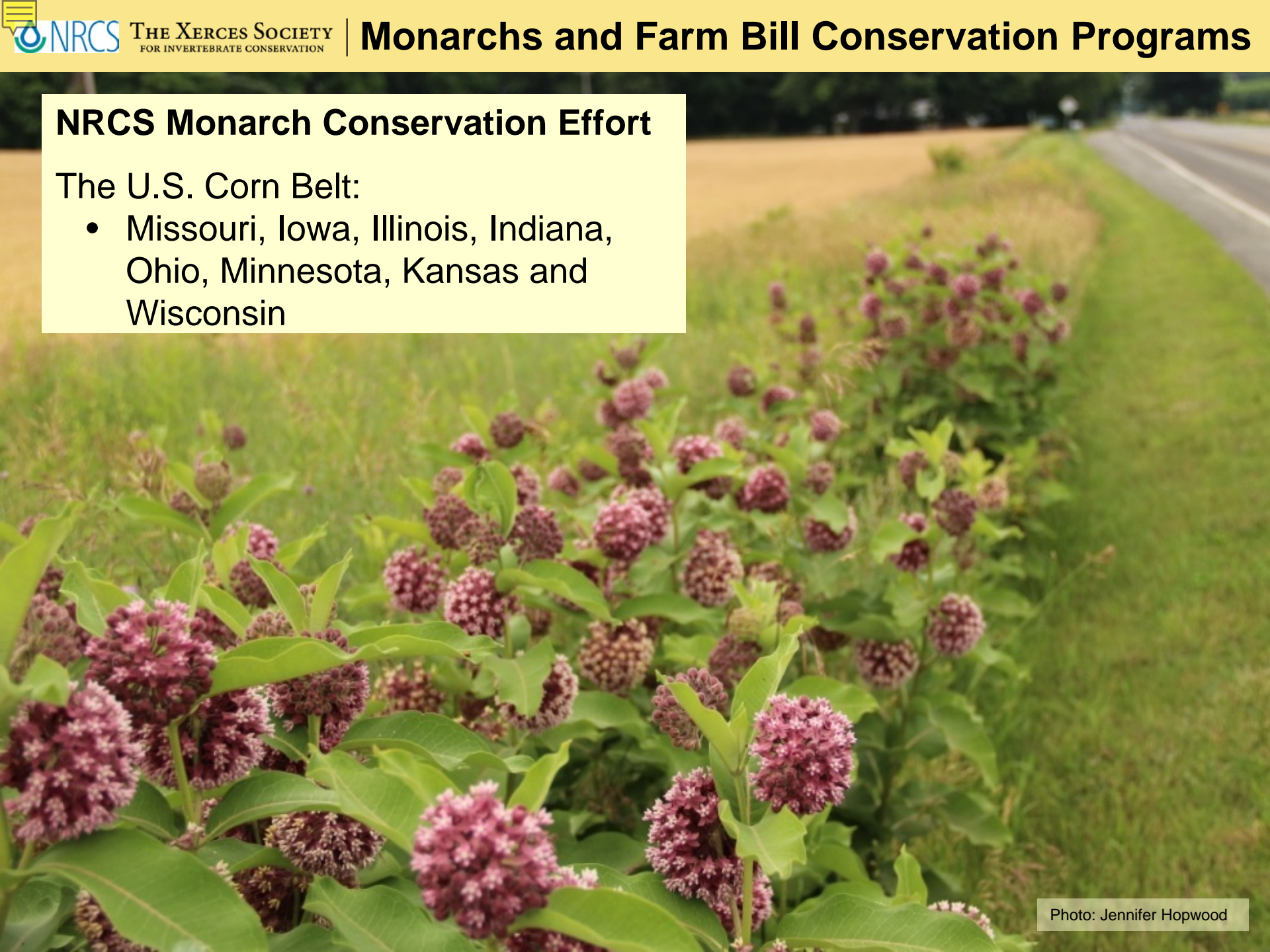
- Using these programs strategically to target conservation to most important areas for monarch breeding:
 - The U.S. Corn Belt: Missouri, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Minnesota, Kansas and Wisconsin
 - The southern plains: Texas and Oklahoma



NRCS Monarch Conservation Effort

The U.S. Corn Belt:

- Missouri, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Minnesota, Kansas and Wisconsin



NRCS Monarch Conservation Effort

The southern plains:

- Texas, and Oklahoma



NRCS Monarch Conservation Effort

- This doesn't mean other states are not engaged or taking action.
- For examples:
 - South Carolina, Rhode Island, and New Jersey – among others – are all considering how they can provide technical guidance and program support for monarch conservation

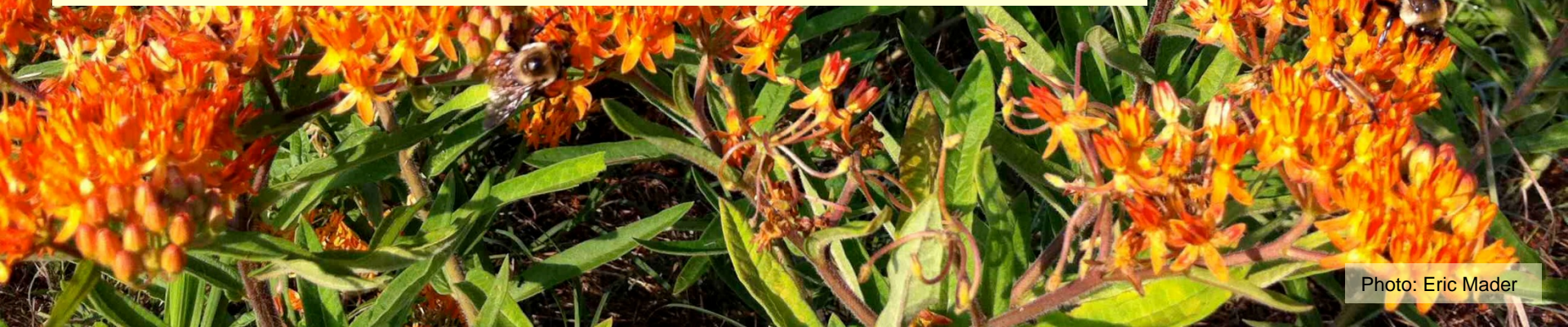


Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)

- 2014 Farm Bill: 5% of EQIP program funding is allocated to support Wildlife Habitat
 - Including Pollinator Habitat or Monarch Habitat
- Pays up to 75% of costs of project implementation (90% for Historically Underserved citizens)

Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)

- **Could be used to provide financial support for:**
 - Creation of milkweed and nectar rich meadows
 - Implementation of land management practices that encourage recruitment of milkweed.
- **Possible Conservation Practices that could be used for Monarch conservation**
 - Conservation Cover (wildflower meadow)
 - Riparian Herbaceous Cover
 - Range Planting
 - Prescribed Grazing
 - Contour Buffer Strips
 - Upland Wildlife Habitat Management



Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

- CSP rewards growers who are already implementing good conservation and sustainable farming practices.
- If landowners rank high enough and qualify for a financial reward, they can be funded to implement additional practices.





NRCS

THE XERCES SOCIETY
FOR INVERTEBRATE CONSERVATION

Monarchs and Farm Bill Conservation Programs

CSP Pollinator and Beneficial Insect Habitat Enhancement (PLT15)

Monarch Supplement: In Spring 2015, NRCS and Xerces technical experts collaborated to develop a supplement to PLT15, supporting the implementation of monarch habitat.



Photo: Bryan E. Reynolds

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

- 2014 Farm Bill: combined formerly separate easement programs, such as the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) and Grassland Reserve Program (GRP), into a single easement program.
- Can cover 50% to 100% of the cost of restoration, depending upon the length and type of easement.
- Ongoing restoration on land currently enrolled in WRP and on future easements enrolled under ACEP will be an important component of NRCS supported monarch conservation.

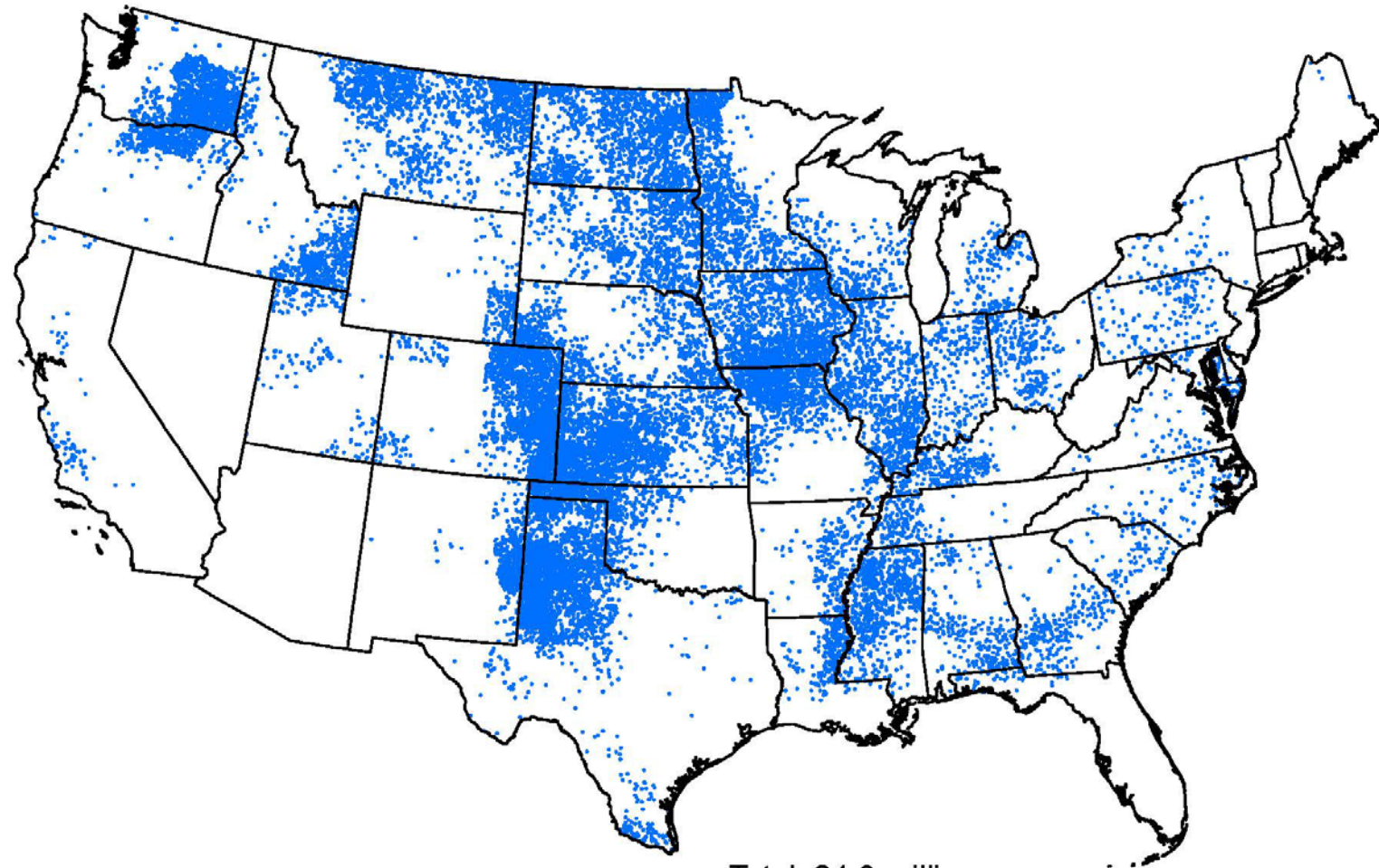


Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

- Administered by the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA)
- Technical support for program implementation provided through a collaboration with the NRCS



CRP Enrollment - December 31, 2014



• 1 Dot = 1,000 Acres

Total: 24.3 million acres

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

- Monarch habitat can be added using the Pollinator Enhancement (CP 42)
- Discussions underway about how to use mid-contract management as a tool for landowners to increase abundance of milkweed on land currently enrolled in CRP.
- State partners could also work with FSA and NRCS to apply for a State Acres for Wildlife (SAFE) Monarch Habitat program. If approved, this would set aside specific CRP acres to be enrolled in monarch habitat.



USDA monarch habitat effort

- An overarching national strategy has been developed, targeting key NRCS administered programs: EQIP, ACEP, CSP
- State technical staff are meeting with their state and national counterparts and partners to develop program details:
 - Meetings are regional: Corn Belt meeting was in Minnesota three weeks ago, Southern Plains meeting is next week
- From sub-regional meetings, recommendations for how to structure technical and program support will be developed
- FY2015 (through end of September) will be a pilot year, with more programs coming on line in FY2016
- FSA will continue to look for opportunities to expand CRP program to help monarchs.

