

The [Association of State Drinking Water Administrators \(ASDWA\)](#) and the [Ground Water Protection Council \(GWPC\)](#) work with our members to support and promote state source water protection (SWP) program planning and implementation across the nation. These efforts began with the development of source water assessments under the 1996 Amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act and continued through state engagement with multiple partners to advance SWP implementation. Efforts at the national scale included establishing the [Source Water Collaborative \(SWC\)](#) in 2006 with 13 (now 30) member agencies, associations, and organizations. ASDWA and GWPC were the founding SWC co-chairs and ASDWA and Clean Water Action have been the co-chairs since 2021. ASDWA and GWPC work with our collective members, the SWC members, and other organizations to support state, watershed, and local SWP implementation, by sharing information through meetings and webinars on new and existing opportunities, including updating source water assessments, and strategies for protection planning, projects, practices, and leveraging funding.

### 2022 ASDWA and GWPC State Survey and Information Collection

This fact sheet is primarily intended for ASDWA and GWPC members and their state SWP programs and state SWP coordinators, as well as SWP partners. This information is based on the responses of 41 state SWP programs to a survey that ASDWA and GWPC conducted in the fall of 2022. The purpose is to provide an update to the [September 2021 Report and Fact Sheet](#) that shared information about the accomplishments of state SWP program efforts since the passage of the 2018 Farm Bill (Agriculture Improvement Act, particularly the Conservation Title), including challenges and state examples of potential solutions for making further progress.

### States Collaborate with Multiple Partners on Source Water Protection Efforts

# States	Partners
36	State Rural Water Associations
33	EPA Regions
25	USDA NRCS
22	State CWA Programs
21	State Agriculture Depts
19	Conservation Districts
18	AWWA Sections
13	USDA Forest Service
13	Other partners*
11	State Foresters

Reflecting that partnerships are key to source water protection success, this table represents the number of states that reported working with these federal, state, and local partners. Over half of the 41 responding states are working with State Rural Water Associations, EPA Regions, NRCS, State Clean Water Act (CWA) Programs, and State Agriculture Departments, while smaller numbers of states are working with the other partners.

**\*Other Partners:** Some of the other partners state SWP programs reported working with are water systems, municipalities, planning boards, land trusts, watershed councils, state and US Geological Surveys, other state agencies such as Departments of Natural Resources and Transportation, university extension programs, and nonprofit organizations.

### Work with Agricultural Partners

**Continued Progress, with 2022 Decline in State SWP Coordination with NRCS:** The following table provides an overview of the 2022 ASDWA-GWPC survey responses from 41 states about coordination with NRCS. In contrast to the 34 states who reported in 2021 that they were working with NRCS to identify and refine priority source water areas under the 2018 Farm Bill, 25 states in 2022 reported participating with NRCS in this activity, which leads to increased cost-share for farmers receiving funds from NRCS conservation programs to install conservation practices in the NRCS priority SWP areas. About one-third of responding states reported not working with NRCS this year, with some expressing intention to do so in the coming year. Most states working with state NRCS offices reported successful coordination and expressed interest in continuing or increasing collaboration with NRCS, and some states reported achieving the allowed 20 percent of state land area for NRCS priority SWP protection areas for the first time. States also noted that the SWP subcommittees of the NRCS State Technical Committees (STCs) have provided helpful venues for discussion and coordination with NRCS.

2022 (41 State Responses)	2022 Total Yes (of 41 states)	2021 Total Yes (of 40 states)	Northeast NRCS Region (13 states)	Southeast NRCS Region (11 states)	Central NRCS Region (12 states)	Western NRCS Region (13 states)
State participated with NRCS to identify/refine priority SWP areas	25	33	9	1	7	8
NRCS informed state which priority SWP areas were selected	23	31	10	1	7	5
State participates in NRCS State Technical Committee	22	29	8	2	6	6
State has an SWP State Subcommittee	13	16	3	1	6	3
State participates in NRCS SWP Subcommittee	10	16	1	1	6	2
State participates in local SWCD meetings	4	6	2	0	0	1

#### Reasons for the Decline in NRCS Coordination from 2021 to 2022:

The decline in the number of states that reported NRCS informed them of the selected priority SWP areas may be due to different factors. In some states, the state SWP programs and NRCS have established the agreed upon information used to identify and refine SWP priority areas, and there may have been fewer significant adjustments to those areas in 2022. However, at least one state was not successful in their request to include groundwater protection areas in the 2023 NRCS priority SWP areas. Coordination may have also been more challenging due to recent turnover in personnel both in state SWP programs and in state NRCS offices. Regarding the number of states that reported participating in NRCS SWP subcommittees, one state reported that their subcommittee met only in the first year of implementing the 2018 Farm Bill. Some state NRCS offices have also either just started to form these SWP subcommittees or have not formed them at all. In addition, state SWP programs reported little systematic coordination to promote implementation of conservation practices in the selected priority areas.



#### Suggested Solutions for Better Coordination with State NRCS Offices

Based on the survey responses and subsequent discussions, state SWP programs want to provide input for and understand the selection of priority SWP areas, and want a better understanding of outcomes resulting from the selection of NRCS priority SWP areas, through contracts with producers that lead to implementation of conservation practices and water quality outcomes. To address this need, all State NRCS offices should:

- **Develop State NRCS SWP Priority Areas and Maps and Engage Partners in the Process** to identify and refine SWP priority areas. Post the maps on state NRCS websites and share them with SWP stakeholders.
- **Develop a Measurement Mechanism** to identify conservation dollars spent in individual SWP priority areas in each state as a measure of success, while preserving landowner privacy. This can help identify barriers and opportunities to achieve water quality improvement.
- **Develop Outreach Materials** to engage partners and interested producers to increase projects in SWP priority areas.
- **Continue or establish State SWP Subcommittees** to ensure continued and enhanced coordination to identify state SWP priority areas and promote implementation of conservation practices. This would help hard-wire the approach, considering all the NRCS state staff turnover and vacancies.

## Successful State SWP Program and NRCS Coordination Examples

State	Focus	Coordination Example
<b>California</b>	GIS/maps	Division of Water Quality staff provided Geographic Information Systems (GIS) expertise to support evaluation of NRCS SWP priority areas.
<b>Connecticut</b>	Training/ Outreach	NRCS staff presented at a training for CT water utility watershed inspectors and shared an overview of what to look for on farms, how to interact with farmers, and what services NRCS can offer to producers.
<b>New Hampshire</b>	Program/RCPP Project	The state SWP program coordinated with NRCS on program updates, watershed planning decisions, and on-going RCPP funded land conservation via the Merrimack River Watershed Council.
<b>Iowa</b>	SWP Subcommittee/ Outreach	The state SWP program participates in the STC and SWP Subcommittee, and provides technical guidance on priority watersheds. They also held a statewide learning session for NRCS field staff on SWP activities in Iowa. Iowa NRCS has a <a href="#">fact sheet</a> on source water protection and the Farm Bill.
<b>Nebraska</b>	SWP Subcommittee/ CWA coordination	The NRCS SWP Subcommittee is expanding to become a statewide Water Quality Committee. The <a href="#">NE Source Water Collaborative</a> is working with NRCS on a statewide SWP education event for conservationists. The NRCS priority SWP areas and identified practices are also included in watershed-based planning within the state CWA nonpoint source pollution program.
<b>Oregon</b>	NWQI/ Technical Assistance	The state SWP program is still working through the watershed assessment stage for the state's National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI) SWP areas. The state SWP program coordinates with NRCS to provide technical assistance and data as local partners complete this work, and assists NRCS with review of the final documents upon request.
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	Outreach	Pennsylvania Rural Water Association <a href="#">developed statewide and county level NRCS brochures</a> for producers that share information about NRCS programs and practices, and the map of priority SWP areas.

## Work with Forestry Partners

**Progress in Working with USDA Forest Service and State Foresters:** In 2022, 11 states reported working with their State Forester, and 11 states (with some overlap) reported working with the USDA Forest Service (USFS). As shown in the following table, 13 states shared examples of how they are coordinating with a variety of partners to protect drinking water sources through forested land management, and some have an established group of partners. Many states reported using GIS to help with planning, and three states reported that they are using the [USFS Forests to Faucets \(F2F\)](#) GIS analysis that helps to determine the relative importance of small watersheds to surface drinking water supplies. NRCS can also be a great partner and is able to provide technical and financial assistance for forestry projects to private non-industrial owners of forested land. Two key federal funding sources that some states have used for forestry SWP projects are the [Joint Chiefs Landscape Scale Restoration Partnership](#) (NRCS and Forest Service) and the [Forest Service Landscape Scale Restoration Grants](#).

## Successful State SWP Program and Forestry Coordination Examples

State	Focus	Coordination Example
<b>Alaska</b>	Priorities	The state SWP program worked with the Division of Forestry to include language regarding public water systems (PWSs) and SWP areas in a regional plan, Tanana Valley State Forest Management Plan.
<b>Arkansas</b>	Collaboration	The state revitalized the <a href="#">Watershed Stewardship Program</a> with forestry and drinking water emphasis in forested assessment areas. The <a href="#">Arkansas Forests and Drinking Water Collaborative</a> is an active statewide group of partners that are working together and use GIS analysis to prioritize forested watersheds for SWP.
<b>Colorado</b>	GIS/ Collaboration	The state SWP program is implementing a program to collect PWS infrastructure GIS locational and operational data (values at risk) in and near federal lands for inclusion into land use planning and emergency

*State Source Water Protection Programs - Agriculture and Forestry Coordination Progress Update  
ASDWA and GWPC - February 2023*

		response actions for wildfire, working mostly with USFS, intending to expand to Bureau of Land Management. USFS and the state forester also participate in the <a href="#">Wildfire Protection Group</a> meetings.
<b>Connecticut</b>	GIS/F2F/ Funding	The state SWP program is working on a statewide source protection GIS mapping application using NRCS funding that will include using data from the <a href="#">USFS F2F</a> GIS analysis. USFS staff was willing to meet several times to better understand the data layers and help guide the use of their data.
<b>Michigan</b>	F2F	The state SWP program has started working with our Forestry group and they have started a F2F initiative.
<b>Minnesota</b>	Collaboration/ Funding	The state SWP program has increased coordination with the Department of Natural Resources and the state forester, and with a technical and financial assistance provider, as well as providing data for planning.
<b>New Hampshire</b>	Planning/F2F	The state added SWP language to the NH State Forest Action Plan that includes reference to the <a href="#">USFS F2F</a> analysis.
<b>North Carolina</b>		The state SWP program participates on an interagency Watershed Restoration Improvement Team (WRIT) with the NC Forest Service where they can interact on shared water quality concerns. Both programs also participate in the Drought Management Advisory Council meetings.
<b>Oregon</b>	Legislation/ Collaboration/ Land	In 2022, the state <a href="#">Forest Practices Act rule changes</a> that primarily address habitat and conservation plan requirements, now also include SWP improvements. The state has a land acquisition and conservation easement initiative to build drinking water resiliency, and is working with many partners to help PWSs and their communities build funding packages and support to pay for ecosystem services that support SWP.
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	Collaboration	The state SWP program is developing a Commonwealth-wide relationship; currently focusing in areas developing or with SWP programs and plans, and is also experiencing continued success with The Nature Conservancy <a href="#">Working Woodlands Program</a> .
<b>Texas</b>	Collaboration	The <a href="#">Texas Forests &amp; Drinking Water Partnership</a> is an active statewide group of partners that held the latest meeting in September 2022 to identify follow-up actions to continue momentum towards enhanced watershed stewardship and protection in key Texas forested watersheds.
<b>Vermont</b>	Collaboration/ Funding	The state SWP program has participated in meetings with state, EPA, and regional partners to explore initiatives and apply for a <a href="#">USFS Landscape Scale Restoration Grant</a> for a multi-state project.

## **Resources and Contacts**

### **State and EPA Source Water Protection Contacts**

- State SWP coordinators: [www.asdwa.org/sourcewatercontacts/](http://www.asdwa.org/sourcewatercontacts/)
- EPA Regional SWP coordinators: [www.epa.gov/sourcewaterprotection/source-water-contacts-epas-regional-offices](http://www.epa.gov/sourcewaterprotection/source-water-contacts-epas-regional-offices)

### **Source Water Collaborative (SWC) Member Resources**

- ASDWA Source Water Protection: <https://www.asdwa.org/source-water/>
- EPA Source Water Protection: <https://www.epa.gov/sourcewaterprotection>
- NRCS Source Water Protection, with map of priority areas: [www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/source-water-protection](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/source-water-protection)
- NRCS State Conservationists: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/conservation-basics/conservation-by-state/state-offices>
- AWWA Information for Agriculture Partners: [www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/source-water-protection](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/source-water-protection)
- State Forest Action Plans and Contacts: <https://www.stateforesters.org/forest-action-plans/>
- USDA Forest Service Regional Contacts: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/about-agency/contact-us/regional-offices>
- SWC website - Collaboratives Near You, Learning Exchange, Agricultural Toolkits: [www.sourcewatercollaborative.org](http://www.sourcewatercollaborative.org)

### **For more information and opportunities to work together, contact:**

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