

Driftless Area Landscape Conservation Initiative

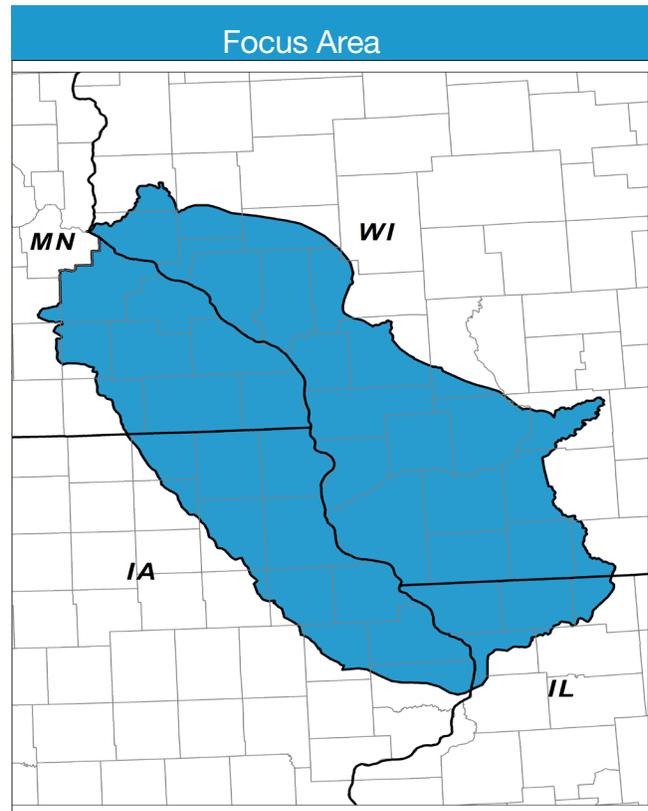
Conservation Beyond Boundaries **DALCI**

The Driftless Area is a stunningly beautiful, 24,000-square-mile landscape island once surrounded but never touched by giant sheets of glacial ice. This ancient landscape has evolved over thousands of years to reveal rocky bluffs, ridgetops flanked with steep hillsides and more than 600 coldwater springs and creeks. The four-state Driftless Area is home to many rare species of birds, fish, plants and other wildlife, including threatened and endangered species. The area also provides critical food and habitat for migratory birds.

Water quality and habitat loss pose challenges for this unique region of working farms, pastures, forests, streams and prairies. Its soils are highly vulnerable to erosion, and when it erodes, it threatens water quality and the productivity and sustainability of agriculture. The conversion of forests, grasslands and lands with expiring contracts through USDA's Conservation Reserve Program to intensive agriculture further increases the risk to this delicate ecosystem. NRCS is working with agricultural producers to help protect this unique region through voluntary private lands conservation efforts.

NRCS and the Driftless Area

Through DALCI, NRCS helps producers use voluntary conservation practices to conserve the Driftless Area's natural resources ensuring economic viability of cropland, pastureland and forestland. The initiative focuses on restoring coldwater stream corridors. Common practices include protecting streambanks from erosion, adding fences to manage livestock access to streams, removing obstructions in the water, adding stream crossings, enabling fish passage and managing habitat for wildlife.



Outcomes and Impacts

This initiative provides targeted assistance for producers. By taking immediate action, producers can reverse the decline for at-risk species and habitats, like brown trout and cold water streams, resulting in the overall health of the watersheds and their natural resources.

Coldwater streams are a key indicator of the health of this landscape. By targeting resources in priority watersheds, NRCS can work with producers to best restore stream corridors and implement conservation practices that lead to cleaner water downstream. Cleaner, cooler water, less erosion and more wildlife habitat will help bring economic and social well-being to producers and others.



Restoring coldwater streams on private lands helps a variety of wildlife and fish including brown trout.

Fiscal Year 2013-2015 Driftless Area Landscape Conservation Initiative
NRCS Financial Assistance (FA) and Active and Completed Projects

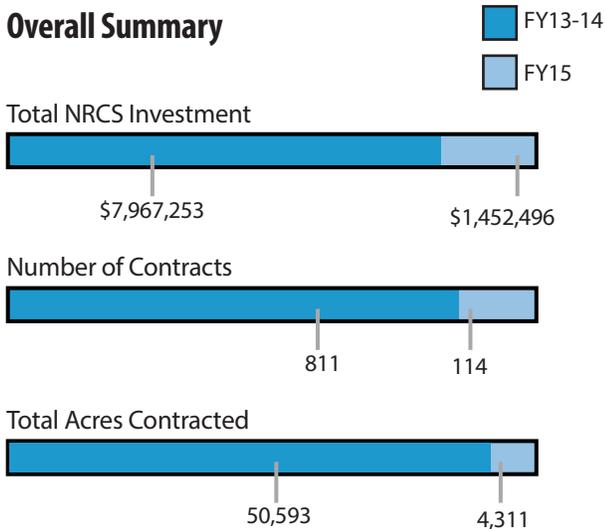
State	Acres	NRCS Investment	Contracts
Illinois	10,485	\$840,690	250
Iowa	4,268	\$1,129,047	48
Minnesota	17,295	\$1,923,694	167
Wisconsin	23,021	\$5,526,317	463
Total	55,069	\$9,419,748	928

Data source: NRCS Resource Economics, Analysis and Policy Division, October 2015.

NRCS GOALS

Through DALCI, NRCS works with producers to improve water quality and enhance wildlife habitat in this sensitive region. To help address these goals, NRCS is focusing efforts on restoring coldwater streams. By 2018, NRCS aims to restore 25 miles of streams, increase brown trout numbers to 30,000, reduce runoff of sediment by 150,000 tons and improve 20,500 acres of upstream habitat.

Overall Summary



**Milestones:
Improving Coldwater Streams**

