



American Bird Conservancy: Improving Oak Ecosystem Health in the Great Lakes Region in WI, IL – 2018 FB RCPP Project #2727 Land Management Plan and Process

Project Description/Summary:

The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) is a partnership that leverages capabilities and resources, targets assistance where it is most needed, cooperatively engages project partners, and works collaboratively with agriculture producers, forest land managers, and Tribes. The goal of this project is to restore, enhance, and protect oak ecosystems (forests, woodlands, and savannas) at a landscape scale to improve ecosystem health, connectivity, and biological diversity on private lands in regions of Wisconsin (WI) and Illinois (IL) where oak ecosystems historically thrived. Oak ecosystems are among the most highly-productive ecosystems in the world, but are rapidly declining and globally imperiled. Oaks are a keystone species, providing habitat structure and critical compositional features for 250+ species of birds, 500+ species of insects, and 500+ species of plants. Numerous State Wildlife Actions Plans' Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) are found in quality oak systems, including the project's primary focal species, Red-Headed Woodpecker and Cerulean Warbler, along with the federally endangered Rusty Patched Bumble Bee and Karner Blue Butterfly. Restoration potential for oak systems is high, with 70% of remaining oak acres in the project region under private ownership. Objectives of this project are to implement focal species best management practices (BMPs) on private lands through RCPP technical and financial assistance from 2023 through 2028.

Project Area:

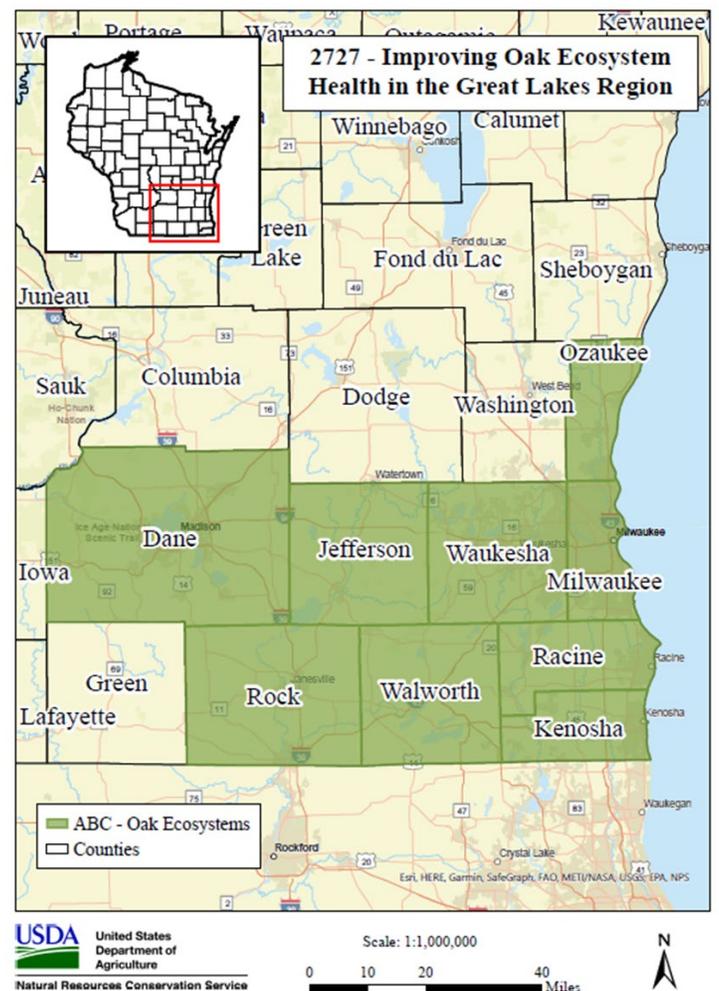
The project must intersect the boundary of the 2727 ABC Project Area and ranking will be set to implement these boundaries (larger map available below).

Eligible Land Management Producer Contract Land Uses:

Forest, Crop, Pasture, Associated Agricultural Land

Eligible Resource Concern Categories:

At least 1 of the resource concern categories below must be assessed in Conservation Assessment and Ranking Tool (CART) and show an improvement in the resource concern.





- Degraded plant condition
- Field sediment, nutrient pathogen loss
- Fire management
- Long term protection of land
- Soil quality limitations
- Source water depletion
- Storage of pollutants
- Terrestrial habitat
- Weather resilience
- Wind water erosion

Habitat Suitability Indexes:

Unique [Habitat Suitability Indexes \(HSI\)](#) have been developed for oak savanna ecosystems.

Eligible Land Management Practices:

Code	Practice Name
106*	Forest Management Plan
160*	Prescribed Burning DIA
314	Brush Management
315	Herbaceous Weed Management
327	Conservation Cover
338	Prescribed Burning
342	Critical Area Planting
382	Fence
384	Woody Residue Treatment
394	Firebreak
420	Wildlife Habitat Planting
472	Access Control
484	Mulching
490	Tree/Shrub Site Prep
500	Obstruction Removal
612	Tree/Shrub Establishment
643	Restoration of Rare or Declining Natural Communities
645	Upland Wildlife Habitat Management
666	Forest Stand Improvement

*106 Forest Management Plan and 160 Prescribed Burning Plan will be contracted separately from practice implementation contracts

Application Processing:

RCPP is a stand-alone program and requires its own NRCS-1200 application separate from other NRCS FA



programs. All 2018 Farm Bill (FB) RCPP applications will be continuously accepted, and signup cut off dates will be publicly announced each year. For Land Management producer contracts, question 2 of the NRCS-CPA-1200 Conservation Program Application (version October 2021) should be marked “Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)”. Write “2727 ABC RCPP LM” in box 2a (see NB 300-22-8). 2018 Farm Bill RCPP applications will be managed through Conservation Desktop. USDA Financial Assistance Eligibility will need to be determined manually with the Farm Service Agency’s Subsidiary Report. A project-level Adjusted Gross Income waiver is on file for this project and participants are not required to file or meet adjusted gross income eligibility policies. Further guidance will be available outlining how to this is handled for obligation.

2. Interested in participating in the following (select all that apply):

- Agricultural Conservation Easement Program-Wetland Reserve Easement (ACEP-WRE)
- Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA)
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

a) Program enrollment type, activity type, and/or project name, as applicable:

2727 ABC RCPP LM

Workload Prioritization:

There will be a workload prioritization tool for this project in Fiscal Year 2024 that helps identify projects which will rank high and have conservation planning and ranking completed.

Ranking Criteria

Section: Applicability WI 2727 ABC RCPP v2024		
Question	Answer Choices	Points
Does the assessed practice schedule intersect the boundary of the 2727 ABC project area?	Yes	--
	Otherwise	--

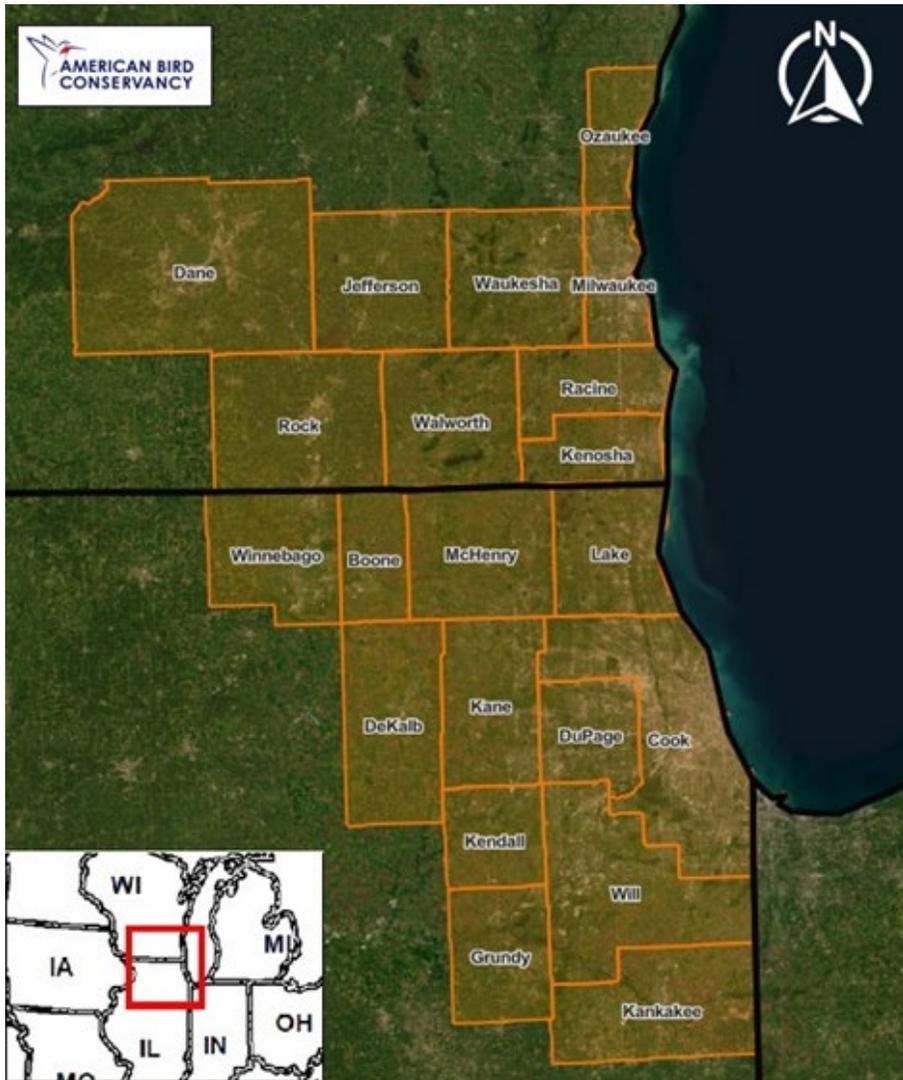
Section: Category WI 2727 ABC RCPP v2024		
Question	Answer Choices	Points
Is this application meant to compete in the 2727 ABC RCPP Project?	YES	--
	NO	--



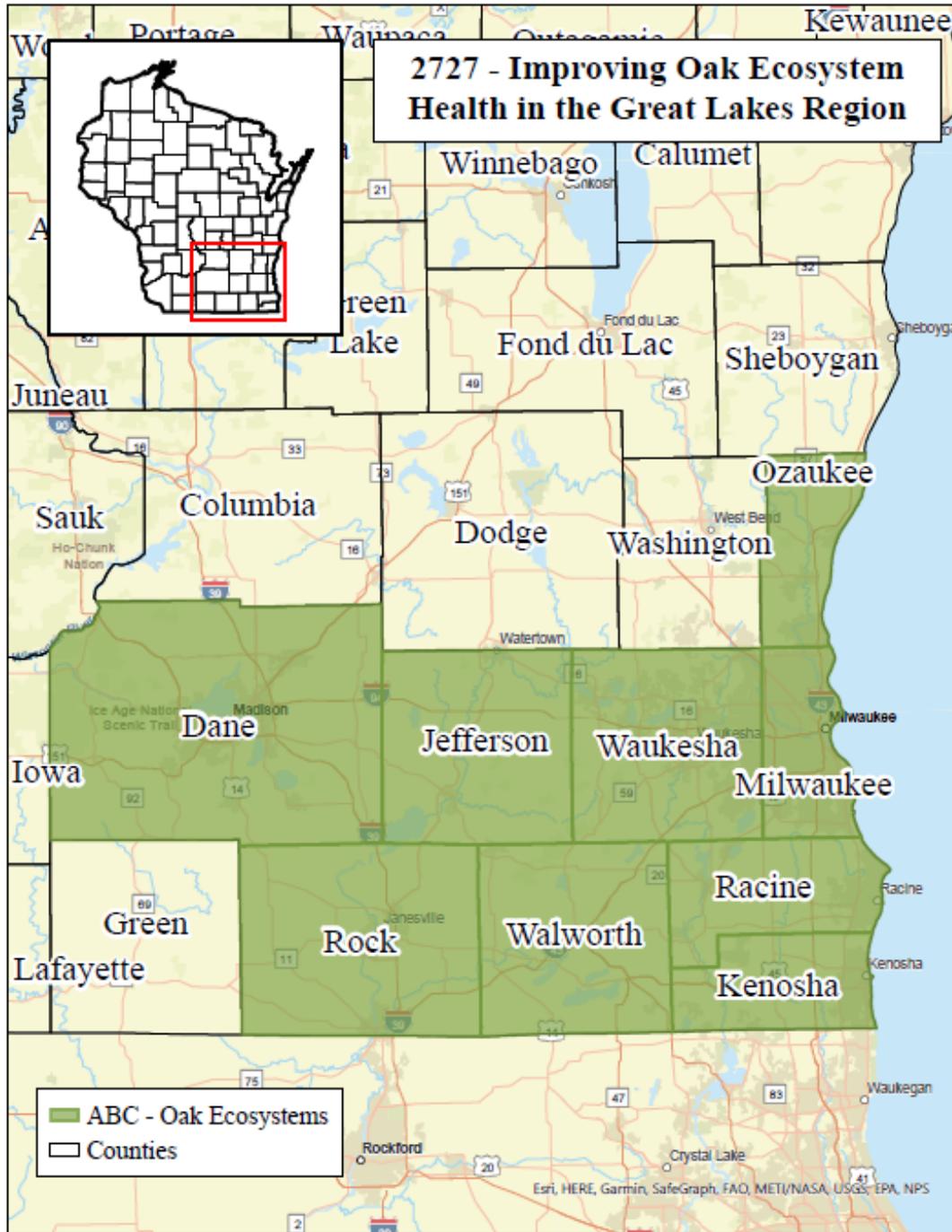
Section: Program WI 2727 ABC RCPP v2024		
Question	Answer Choices	Points
The applicant marked on the NRCS-CPA-1200 that they are a Historically Underserved participant.	YES	40
	NO	0
The applicant has worked with a conservation planner through the conservation process to the extent that:	All implementation requirements or job sheets for all activities included in the application are complete and final with all required JAA signatures.	25
	At least 1 practice in the application has an implementation requirement or job sheet that is complete and final with all required JAA signatures.	5
	No implementation requirements are complete and final.	0
The applicant has an active forest management plan meeting NRCS requirements.	YES	60
	NO	0
The application includes a Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) for oak savanna resulting in a HSI Post Treatment score of:	0.75 or higher	55
	Equal to or greater than 0.625 and less than 0.75	30
	Greater than 0.5 but less than 0.625	10
	Less than 0.5	0
	For CPA 106 application and all other applications	0
Is this application identified as a bundle by the lead partner?	YES	20
	NO	0

Section: Resources WI 2727 ABC RCPP v24		
Question	Answer Choices	Points
How many acres of oak-dominated ecosystem will be restored, created, or enhanced?	Greater than 100 acres	95
	Between 50 and 99 acres	75
	Between 20 and 49 acres	50
	Between 5 and 19 acres	25
	Less than 5 acres	5
	none, application is for a CPA 106	0
Applications impacting land adjacent or in close proximity to existing oak habitat protected and managed by government agencies or conservancy groups will be given high priority. The assessed practice schedule is:	Directly adjacent to existing and protected oak habitat	95
	Less than 2 miles from existing and protected oak habitat	60
	Between 2 and 4.9 miles from existing and protected oak habitat	20
	Greater than 5 miles from existing and protected oak habitat	0
The conservation practices on the CPA-1155 occur within 5 years from the obligation date?	YES	10
	NO	0

Overall RCPP Project Boundary



Wisconsin RCPP project boundary (ranking applicability)





RCPP-ABC Project Contacts:

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