**Oklahoma Programs for Addressing Invasive Woody Species**

Programs funded through the conservation title of the farm bill are available and used to address invasive woody species such as eastern red cedar and salt cedar. Each program will have specific rules and regulations related to eligibility and where applicable. The following list includes the primary programs used in Oklahoma as well as special initiatives or projects where funding is targeted to address invasive woody species. Addressing invasive woody species has and will continue to be a top priority.

This summary does not include all other efforts (non program related) by NRCS to address this problem. We collaborate with on numerous efforts that don’t include farm bill programs.

**Technical Assistance (CTA**) provides our farmers, ranchers and forestland owners with the knowledge and tools they need to conserve, maintain and restore the natural resources on their lands and improve the health of their operations for the future. NRCS offers this assistance at no cost to the producers we serve. Our goal is to give our customers personalized advice and information, based on the latest science and research, to help them make informed decisions.

If a producer chooses to take the next step towards improving their operations, we can work with them to develop a conservation plan with suggested conservation practices that can help them reach their production and conservation goals. Producers can also choose to apply for [financial](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/ranking-dates) assistance to get financial help installing the conservation practices outlined in their conservation plan.

**Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)** is NRCS’ flagship conservation program that helps farmers, ranchers and forest landowners integrate conservation into working lands. EQIP funds are available to help producers implement conservation plans on their land to help solve on-farm resource concerns, including invasive woody species control. Financial assistance through EQIP assists producers by making available financial funding to help offset or reimburse costs for implementing practices on the land. Producer and land eligibility rules must be followed. Producers work through their local field offices to request funding, make applications and develop contracts.

Through EQIP during the past 10 years alone, NRCS has contracted implementation of brush management on a little over 2 million acres of land and spent over $25 million. We estimate another $1.3 million spent over the past 10 years to implement prescribed burns on a little over 200,000 acres.

EQIP funds have also been used to target funding in specific areas across the state to address woody encroachment. The Great Plains Grasslands Initiative (GPGI) was developed to target 5 Core Areas across the state where stakeholders identified existing intact grasslands and utilized funding to protect these core areas and push back the spread of woody species. In the past two years, $2.3 million of GPGI funds have been obligated in these 5 core areas. GPGI will continue as interest is growing in the core areas.

**Other targeted projects are being implemented through EQIP in the Blue River watershed, Cross Timbers Ecoregion and Statewide to improve Monarch habitat. These all include components which address woody species.**

**Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)** is a partner-driven approach to conservation that funds solutions to natural resource challenges on agricultural land. Eligible partners leverage their funds with NRCS funds to collaborate on common goals and delivering results for agriculture and conservation. RCPP projects are implemented using NRCS contracts and/or easements with producers, landowners and communities, in collaboration with project partners.

We do not currently have any RCPP projects that target invasive woody species. However, past projects targeting restoration work in the Cross Timbers and Monarch habitat resulted in a little over 12,000 acres being treated with brush management and prescribed burning ($1.2 million spent). Future opportunities do exist for RCPP in Oklahoma focused on targeting invasive woody species as this is a high priority for NRCS Oklahoma. Potential partners can work together to develop proposals and should work closely with the NRCS State Office leadership during the process.