



FACTSHEET

Driftless Area Landscape Conservation Initiative 2.0

The Driftless Area covers 24,000 square miles in the heart the Upper Mississippi River Basin spanning four states and forming the largest contiguous area of fish and wildlife habitat remaining in the Central United States. Unlike most of the Upper Midwest, this area was bypassed by the last continental glaciation. This fragile landscape is especially vulnerable to climate destruction that impacts wild life, natural resources, and the local economy.



The original Driftless Area Landscape Conservation Initiative (DALCI) was a conservation program for Driftless Area landowners that was administered by NRCS and funded through EQIP. The program was authorized for five-years ending in 2017. DALCI focused on four resource objectives to reduce erosion and restore streams – which helps farmers, enhances wildlife, and improves water quality.

DALCI was a very successful program but left behind unmet needs. There is now a unique opportunity to build on that success and create DALCI 2.0 with increased funding.

With increased funding, DALCI 2.0 would

- *support the transition to regenerative agriculture and conservation infrastructure*
- *expand outdoor recreation*
- *reduce nutrient pollution runoff from agricultural land*
- *protect wildlife habitat and improve the area’s rich biodiversity*
- *advance climate mitigation and resilience*





DALCI 2.0

Resource Objectives to Support Regenerative Agriculture

1. Manage working lands for year-round ground cover to rebuild soil, sequester carbon, improve water quality, increase water holding capacity, reduce soil erosion and mitigate flooding, and other climate impacts.
2. Manage woodlands for increased biodiversity, improving the health of the woods to provide habitat and sequester carbon.
3. Restore prairies and manage grasslands and oak savannas, expanding habitat and sequestering carbon.
4. Restore cold water streams, reducing stream bank erosion and threats of flooding while improving trout habitat.
5. Build for the future and enhance the entire farm ecosystem by establishing grassroots partnerships to educate land owners and operators on the benefits of regenerative agriculture, soil health, and holistic grazing.

Economic Benefits

The original DALCI funded more than 25 miles of stream restoration; however, the overall benefit of that work extended much further. It increased the brown trout population by 30,000, reduced runoff of sediment by 175,000 tons, and improved 24,500 acres of upstream habitat. With more than 5,700 miles of trout stream in the Driftless Area, a new DALCI initiative would provide additional trout habitat, improve water quality and provide immediate economic activity in rural America.

*Trout Unlimited
commissioned a study in
2015 that shows recreational
angling in the Driftless Area
generated \$1 billion-dollar
annual benefit to the local
economy.*

Projects in the Queue for Restoration

In the Wildlife Action Plans for [Wisconsin](#), [Illinois](#), [Iowa](#) and [Minnesota](#), all four states designated the Driftless Area as a part of the Conservation Opportunity Areas. These states have identified 147 actions and projects, targeting the Driftless Area, that need to be funded.

This proposal will add to the **ecological restoration economy** in an agricultural region dominated by farms and small towns. A [recent study](#), “Estimating the Size and Impact of the Ecological Restoration Economy” shows the **economic impact at \$25 billion** in direct and indirect linkages, **including over 221,00 jobs**.

