

Southeast Farm Bill Summit

Kate Hansen, Ben Knuth



2022-2023 Farm Bill Summits



Plan for Today

- Welcome
- Opening Remarks
 - Sarah Gledhill, Florida Wildlife Federation
- Farm Bill Conservation Refresher
- Outlook for May
- Reports From the Field
 - Neil Fleckenstein, Tall Timbers
 - Ayesha Ali, InCommon Group
 - Anyone else?
- Tactics and Discussion
- Next Steps

Sarah Gledhill

President & CEO, Florida Wildlife Federation



The Farm Bill is the Largest Federal Investment in Private Lands Conservation

- Passed about every five years – expires Sept. 30, 2024
- More than \$6 billion annually for conservation
- Historic \$20 billion additional funding in 2022 from IRA
- Quick facts
 - In 2021, Farm Bill conservation touched 45 million acres
 - 60% of contiguous US is privately owned



IRA & Conservation: Florida & Georgia



- \$19.4m for 82,000 acres from IRA (2023)
- \$522 million for 2.6 million acres ('19-'23)
- 78% of EQIP/CSP apps rejected (2023)
- Top IRA funded practices in the region
 1. Prescribed burning
 2. Weed control
 3. Tree/shrub establishment
 4. Brush management
 5. Cover crops

Top Priorities from Last Time

- Maintain or increase conservation funding
- Improve access to funding and technical assistance
 - Boots on the ground
 - Streamline application processes
- Align crop insurance with risk-reducing practices
 - \$5/acre premium benefit for acres utilizing cover crops
- Voluntary Public Access & Habitat Incentive Program



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**What's Happening
Now?**

Timeline



- House and Senate Ag Committees released frameworks on May 1
- House expected to introduce bill text as early as next week
- House Ag Committee “mark up” on May 23
 - First of many steps in process
- Timeline for Senate unclear
- Current Farm Bill expires Sept. 30
- Elections Nov. 5

House Framework



- Few details
- Increases “reference prices” for commodities
- Moves IRA funding to baseline but removes climate guardrails
- Includes Feral Swine and VPA-HIP
- Reforms Nutrition Title
- Forest Conservation Easement Program

Senate Framework



- 94 page section by section summary
- IRA climate-smart conservation funding included as written
- Over 100 bipartisan amendments
- Some Wildlife Corridor provisions
- Incorporates conservation practices into crop insurance
- Raises CRP acreage cap to 29 million
- Forestry Data and policy improvements

Conservation Funding & IRA



- “4 corner” agreement to move IRA funding to permanent baseline
- No agreement on climate guardrails
 - Democratic “redline”
- Testament to multi-year long effort to increase conservation funding

Conservation Operations & Technical Assistance



- Bipartisan agreement on improving access to conservation and TA
- \$26m cut to Conservation Operations in FY24
- NRCS providing direct hire authority to some local offices to ease process



Federal Crop Insurance

- Various proposals to change FCIP - no consensus
- NRCS Good Farming Practices now accepted by RMA for FCIP
- State-level soil health matching program



Voluntary Public Access & Habitat Incentive Program

- Bipartisan bicameral agreement to continue
- Voluntary state block grant program
- State agency negotiates with landowner

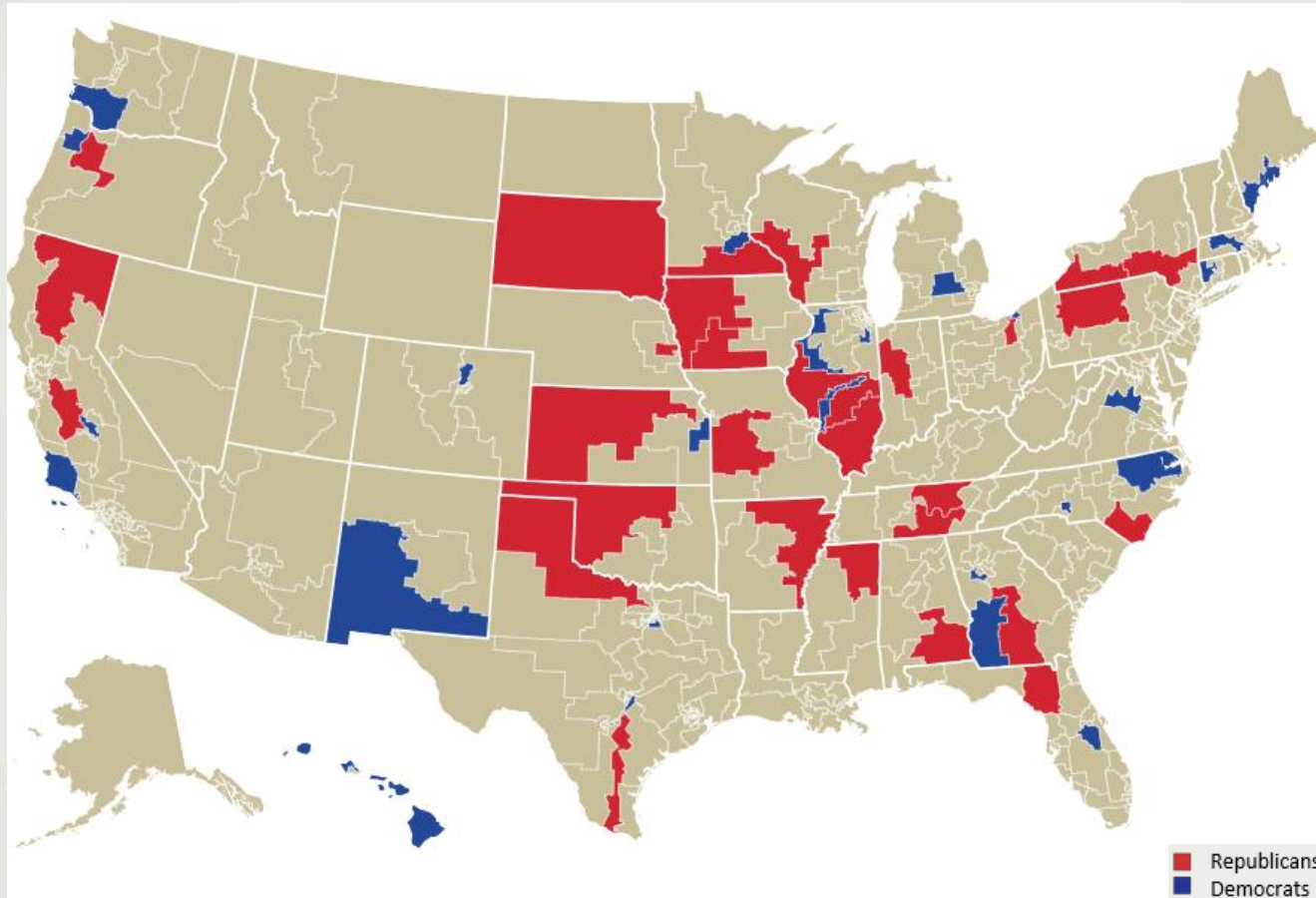
Questions?



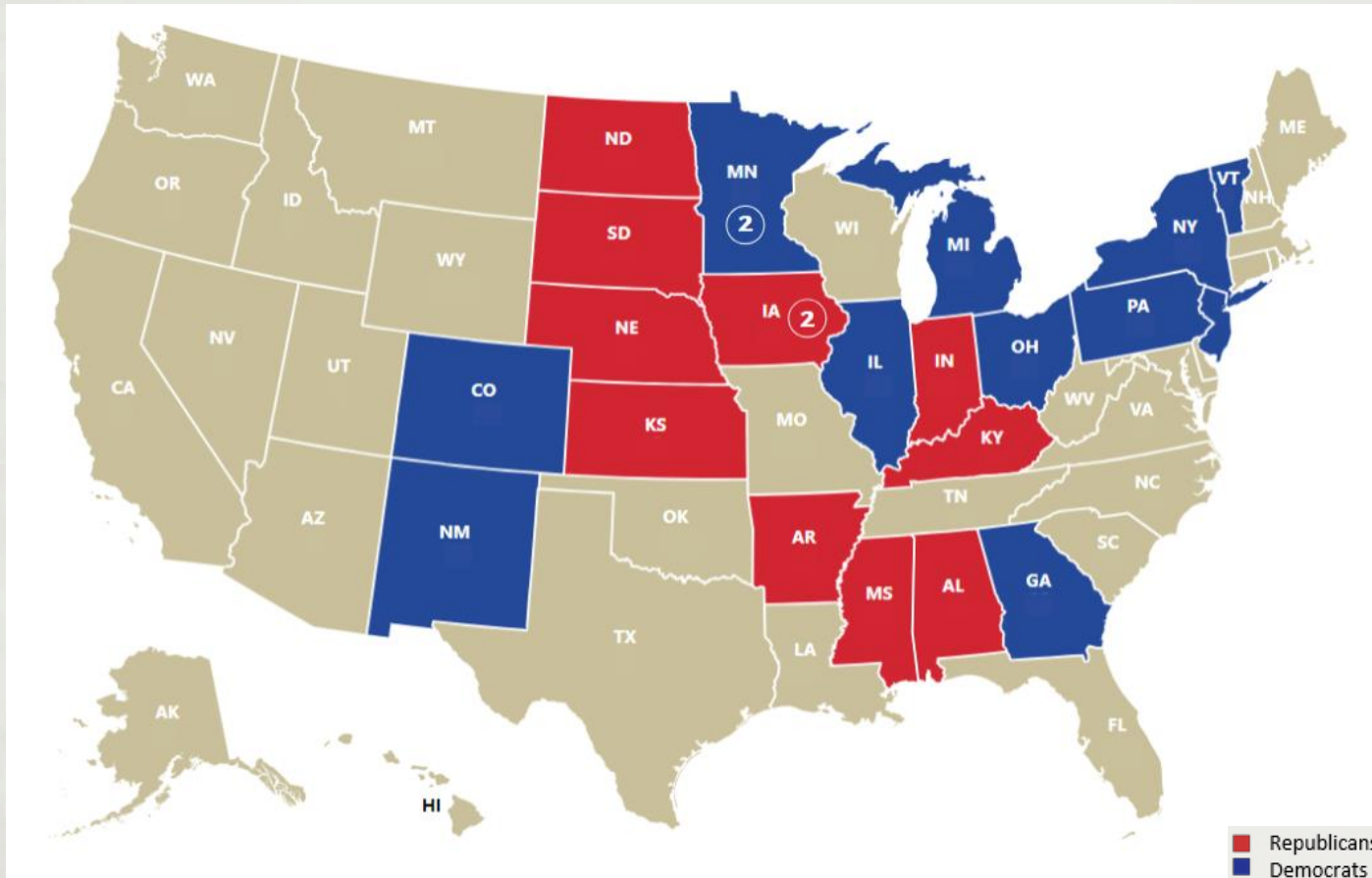
Reports From the Field



House Ag Committee Members



Senate Ag Committee Members



Ways to Engage

- Short-term
 - House advocacy
 - Meetings
 - Calls
 - Emails
 - Letters
 - Media - op-eds, LTEs
- Medium-term
 - House & Senate advocacy
 - Same as above
 - Media - op-eds, LTEs

Key Members of the House & Senate

House Leadership

- Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA-4)
- Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY-8)

House Ag Committee

- Chairman GT Thompson (R-PA-15)
- Ranking Member David Scott (D-GA-13)

Conservation, Research, and Biotechnology Subcommittee

- Chairman Jim Baird (R-IN-4)
- Ranking Member Abigail Spanberger (D-VA-7)

Senate Leadership

- Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY)
- Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY)

Senate Ag Committee

- Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow (D-MI)
- Ranking Member John Boozman (R-AR)

Subcommittee on Conservation, Climate, Forestry, and Nat. Res.

- Chairman Michael Bennet (D-CO)
- Ranking Member Roger Marshall (R-KS)



Ag Committee Members

House

- Rep. Austin Scott (R-GA-8)
- Rep. Sanford Bishop (D-GA-2)
- Rep. Kat Cammack (R-FL-3)*
- Rep. Darren Soto (D-FL-9)

Senate

- Sen. Raphael Warnock (D-GA)*

Discussion



Next Steps

A photograph of a cherry blossom orchard. The trees are covered in pink blossoms, and the background is a soft, misty landscape with more trees. The overall scene is serene and beautiful.

- Ideas to continue this conversation
 - Listservs
 - Email (group or individual)
 - Regular meetings
 - Meetings as needed

Next Steps

- New Farm Bill & IRA fact sheets

Farm Bill Conservation in Georgia

Protect conservation funding for farmers, ranchers, and private landowners.

The Farm Bill provides \$6 billion of annual funding to voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs which help producers and private landowners understand and adopt conservation practices that improve wildlife habitat, soil health, water quality and quantity, resilience to climate change, and empower communities nationwide.

- In 2023, Georgia received \$10.4 million in IRA funding for 32,000 acres
- IRA funding will increase multifold by 2026
- 62% of Georgia's IRA applications were rejected due to insufficient federal funding (2023)
- Only 19% of Georgia's applications to EQIP and CSP were successful (2023)
- Less than 27% of applications were accepted nationwide (2023)

The Inflation Reduction Act Funds In-Demand Practices
The \$20 billion of climate-oriented funds provided by IRA will continue to fund practices in high demand in Georgia and across the nation.

- IRA funds 12 of Georgia's top 15 practices used in 2022
- In Georgia, 584,000 million acres are eligible for 2024 IRA funding (2022)

74% of farmers agree: there should be more conservation funding, not less

- Nationally, NRCS received over \$2.8 billion in applications for the available \$850 million in 2023.
- NRCS rejected over 6,000 eligible applications to IRA funding, awarding 5,350 contracts.
- **Over 39 million acres are eligible for IRA funding in 2024**, based on 2022 practice funding
- Nationwide the top 5 practices, based on acreage, eligible for IRA funding are (1) prescribed grazing, (2) brush management, (3) forest stand improvement, (4) cover crops, and (5) prescribed burning.

NRCS Programs have provided \$381 million to Georgia (2019-2023)

Georgia	2019-2023 Funds	Contracts	Acres
Total	\$ 380,730,127	9,052	1,374,267
ACEP-ALE	\$ 3,058,700	8	875
CRP	\$ 66,016,706	-	183,101
CSP	\$ 92,694,307	1,650	488,534
EQIP	\$ 218,960,354	7,394	701,757

In Georgia, NRCS has funded 9,052 contracts to implement practices on **1.4 million acres (2019-2023)**. Over that time, NRCS obligated **over \$17.3 billion** through **215,543 contracts**, through **215,543 contracts**, on over **117 million acres, nationally**.

Farm Bill Conservation in Florida

Protect conservation funding for farmers, ranchers, and private landowners.

The Farm Bill provides \$6 billion of annual funding to voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs which help producers and private landowners understand and adopt conservation practices that improve wildlife habitat, soil health, water quality and quantity, resilience to climate change, and empower communities nationwide.

- In 2023, Florida received \$9 million in IRA funding. IRA funding will increase multifold by 2026.
- Nationally, 53% of IRA applications were rejected due to insufficient federal funding (2023)
- Only 28% of Florida's applications to EQIP and CSP were successful (2023)
- Less than 27% of applications were accepted nationwide (2023)

The Inflation Reduction Act Funds In-Demand Practices
The \$20 billion of climate-oriented funds provided by IRA will continue to fund practices in high demand in Florida and across the nation.

- IRA funds 9 of Florida's top 15 practices used in 2022
- In Florida, nearly 800,000 acres are eligible for 2024 IRA funding (2022)

74% of farmers agree: there should be more conservation funding, not less

- Nationally, NRCS received over \$2.8 billion in applications for the available \$850 million in 2023.
- NRCS rejected over 6,000 eligible applications to IRA funding, awarding 5,350 contracts.
- **Over 39 million acres are eligible for IRA funding in 2024**, based on 2022 practice funding
- Nationwide the top 5 practices, based on acreage, eligible for IRA funding are (1) prescribed grazing, (2) brush management, (3) forest stand improvement, (4) cover crops, and (5) prescribed burning.

NRCS Programs have provided \$141 million to Florida (2019-2023)

Florida	2019-2023 Funds	Contracts	Acres
Total	\$ 141,591,335	3,011	1,186,032
ACEP-ALE	\$ 13,962,245	15	7,804
CRP	\$ 4,604,170	-	11,388
CSP	\$ 20,550,455	404	440,829
EQIP	\$ 102,474,465	2,592	726,012

In Florida, NRCS has funded 3,011 contracts to implement practices on over 1.1 million acres (2019-2023). Over that time, NRCS obligated over \$17.3 billion through 215,543 contracts, implementing practices on over 117 million acres, nationally.

A male mallard duck is shown in profile, swimming on a body of water. The duck has a vibrant green head, a yellow beak, and a white breast. Its wings are brown and white, and its tail feathers are dark. The water is a light blue color, and the background is blurred.

Thank You!

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