NRCS-EPA Federal Coordination Teams

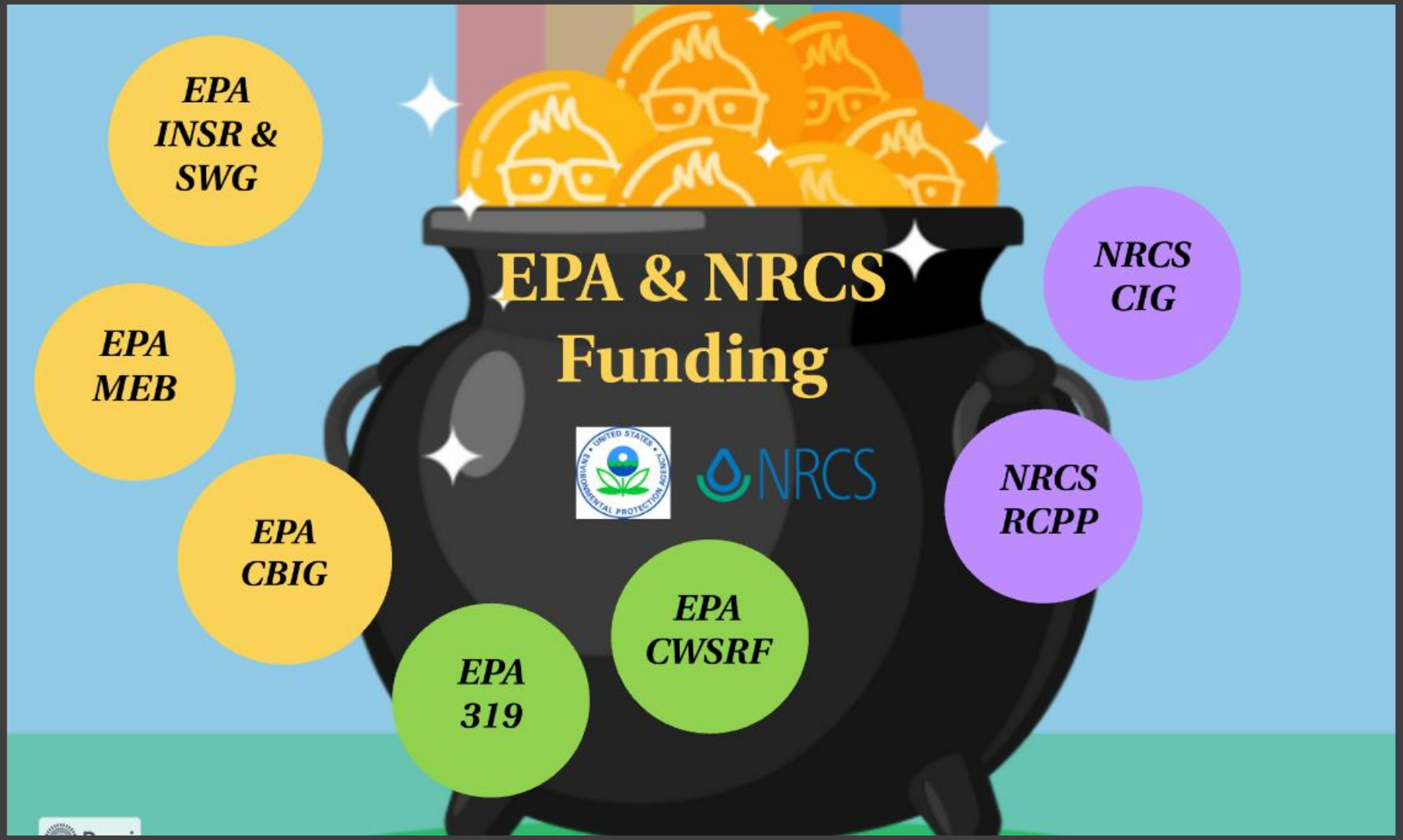
To enhance coordination and communication of agricultural practice and WQ monitoring activities and funding in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed

NRCS

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

USGS

NRCS-EPA Ag Conservation Funding Team

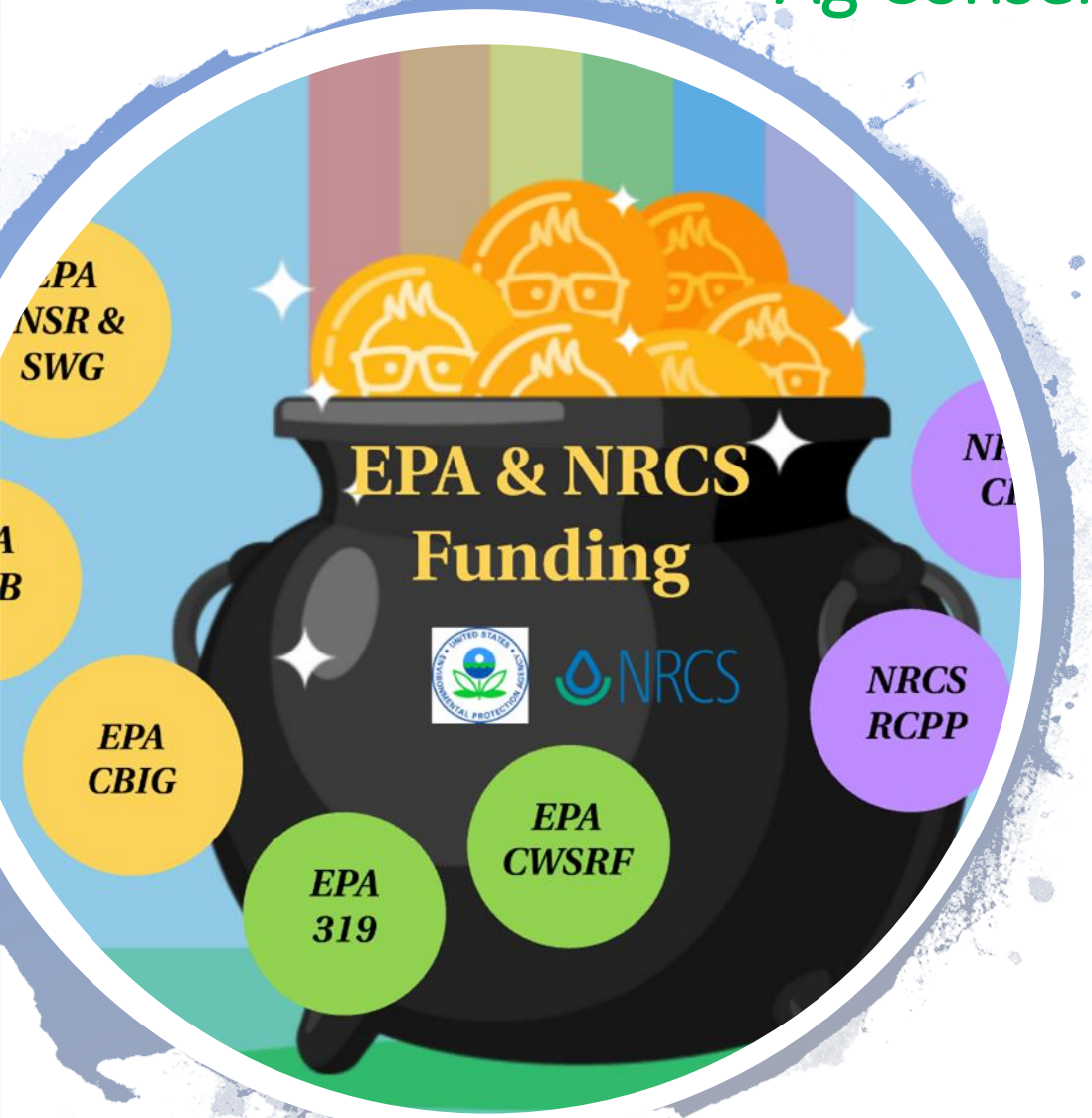


- Enhance ag conservation funding efforts.
- Ensure no unnecessary duplication of efforts.

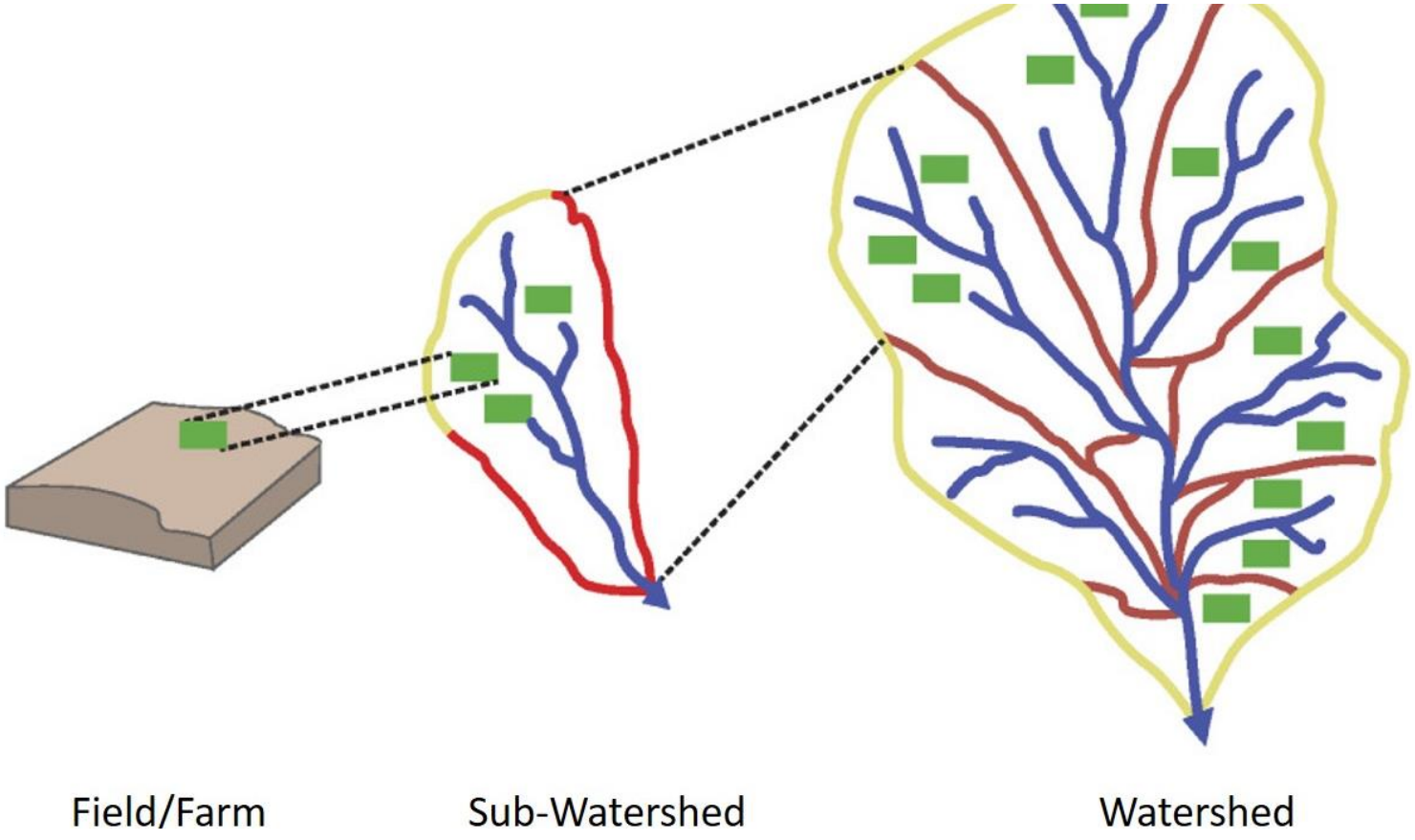
Ag Conservation Funding Team Analysis and Products

- Review of Funding Programs
- Comparative Analysis of Program Elements
  - Funding levels
  - Timing of solicitation
  - Priorities – geographic, practices
  - Match requirements
- Inventory of Projects Funded
- Analysis of Safeguards in Place to Avoid Duplication
- List of Successful Approaches to EPA-NRCS Funding Coordination

Ag Conservation Funding Team - Recommendations

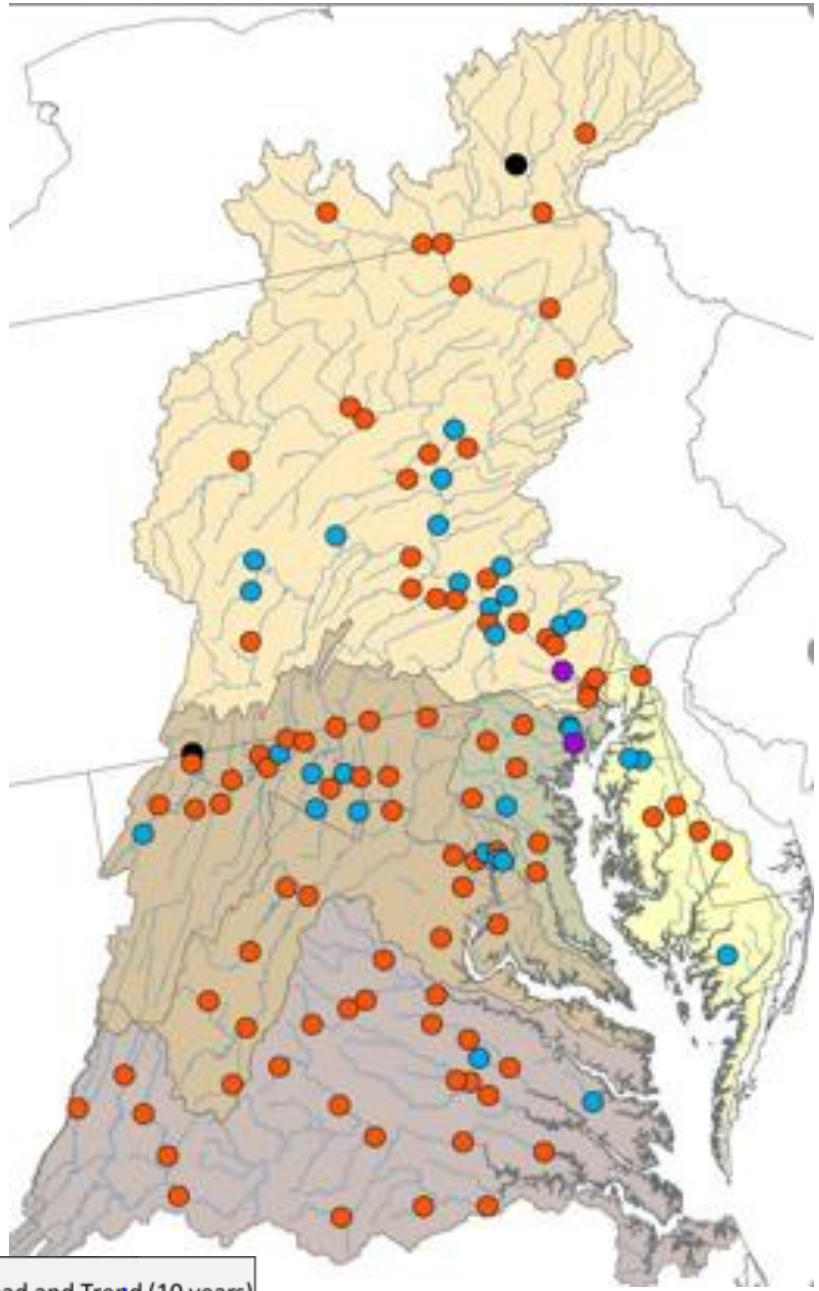


- Coordination Meetings – quarterly
- Joint “Match” Memo – EPA CB Grants/RCPP
- Ag Practice Standards
- CWSRF/EQIP Coordination – Outreach
- Source Water Protection
  - Data sharing – inform SWP area selections, priority practices, ranking criteria
  - Planning – EPA & SW Collaboratives support for Area-Wide Plans
  - Education & Outreach on SWP Funding Opportunities (CWSRF, Local Working Groups)
- Duplication of Payments
- Diversity – Historically Under-Served Farmers



NRCS-EPA-USGS WQ Monitoring Team

- Further coordinate water-quality monitoring, interpretation, and funding
- To assess the impact of agricultural conservation practice implementation on the quality of local streams, rivers, and the tidal Chesapeake Bay.

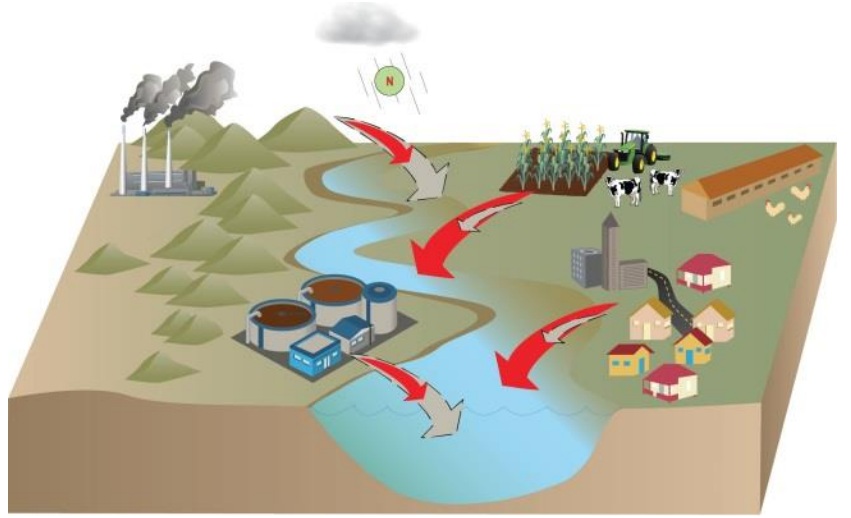


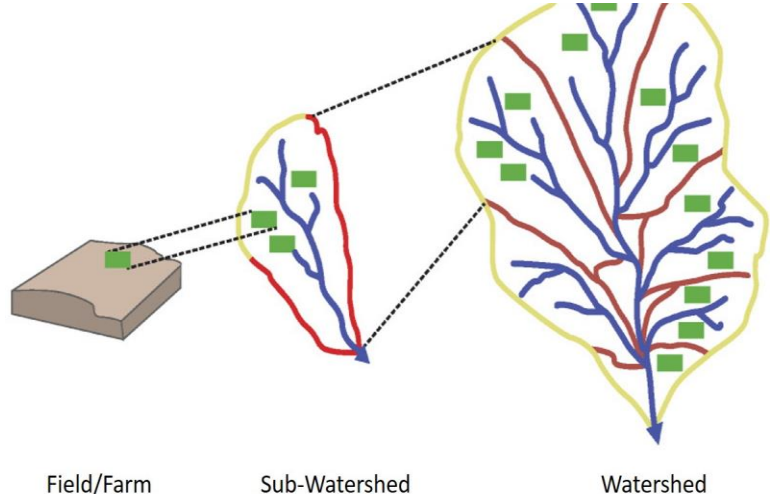
WQ Monitoring Team Analysis & Findings

- **Review of monitoring and analysis activities** (R3 and US)
- **Findings:**
  - Strong CB Non-Tidal Monitoring Network + Others.
  - On-line tools to compile WQ Data. (How's my Watershed)
  - Studies to assess impacts of practices on WQ.
- **Challenge:** Need enhanced monitoring at finer scale to connect practices with WQ changes.

WQ Monitoring Team Recommendations

- Identify Watersheds with greatest needs and opportunities for monitoring impacts of practices on WQ.
  - Develop criteria for selecting watersheds (extent of practices, monitoring)
  - Chose watersheds in each state
- Identify Opportunities to further coordinate WQ monitoring programs and interpretation of results.
  - Evaluate data & current interpretation, identify gaps, enhance monitoring and interpretation (may take additional resources)
- Improve Communication to engage decision makers.





Next Steps - Proposed

- Senior Executive Briefing
  - NRCS and USGS leadership enthusiastically concurred.
  - NRCS/EPA briefing – to be scheduled.
- Develop a timeline for implementation of approved recommendations (January 31, 2021)
- Local Workshops Team Activities Commence (February)

Why connect the NRCS and PSC efforts?

1. Both require site criteria and network analyses to understand current monitoring efforts, gaps, and potential new sites for monitoring.
2. By coordinating these analyses, any expanded NRCS monitoring will be informative to the NTN Network and prevent redundancy.
3. In theory, the outcome should expand NRCS monitoring at a complementary scale (smaller agricultural watershed), which is a gap in the current NTN.
4. It should not result in any loss or realignment of NTN sites – funding for the NRCS expansion would be completely separate from and not dilute NTN efforts.
5. USGS has some limited resources to support the NRCS analysis – applying these same resources to a collaborative analysis increases efficiency for both analyses.

Additional Resources:

1. We’ve developed a first draft criteria table which may help inform the PSC network analysis.
2. We’ve got a 2-pager I’ll share that provides a summary of the NRCS and PSC efforts and these same reasons for connecting the efforts.