

A photograph of a rocky, abandoned mine site. The terrain is rugged and covered with dark, jagged rocks and some sparse, dry vegetation. A small stream or drainage channel is visible in the lower right corner, with a small white object (possibly a rock or debris) near its edge. The overall scene suggests a neglected and potentially hazardous environment.

***Abandoned Mine Land  
Reclamation***

***Is NRCS a  
Potential Partner?***

# *Is NRCS a Potential Partner?*

- Past
  - NRCS Origins & Mission
  - Rural Abandoned Mine Program (RAMP)
- Present
  - Programs
  - Abandoned Mine Reclamation Activities
- Future
  - Potential NRCS Assistance for Abandoned Mine Sites



**United States Department of Agriculture**  
Natural Resources Conservation Service

***“Helping People Help the Land”***

# *Dust Bowl of the 1930's*



# ***1932- Soil Erosion Service***



# 1935- Soil Conservation Service



# **Rural Abandoned Mines Program (RAMP)**



# **RAMP**

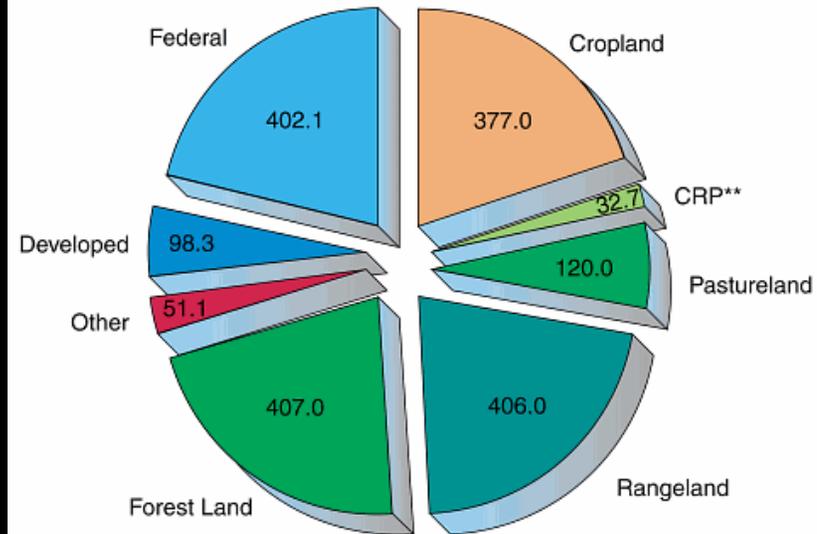
- **1977 – 1997**
- **Surface Mining Control & Reclamation Act (SMCRA)**
- **Established “to protect people and the environment from pre-1977 coal mining activities.”**
- **Funding from Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund (\$0.35/ton surface; \$0.15/ton underground)**

1994 -



### How Our Land is Used

Millions of Acres\*



\*Non-Federal Land 1,492 million acres, including conterminous United States, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and U.S. Virgin Islands.

Source: USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service 1997 National Resources Inventory Revised December 2000

\*\*Conservation Reserve Program Land

Plan of the Sink Center  
Natural Resources Inventory

# ***NRCS CONSERVATION PROGRAMS***



***“Helping People  
Help the Land”***

Technical- and Cost-share  
Assistance  
to  
Agricultural Producers



# ***Conservation Programs***

Wetlands Reserve Program  
(WRP)

Wildlife Habitat Incentive  
Program (WHIP)

Emergency Watershed  
Protection Program (EWP)

Environmental Quality  
Incentives Program  
(EQIP)





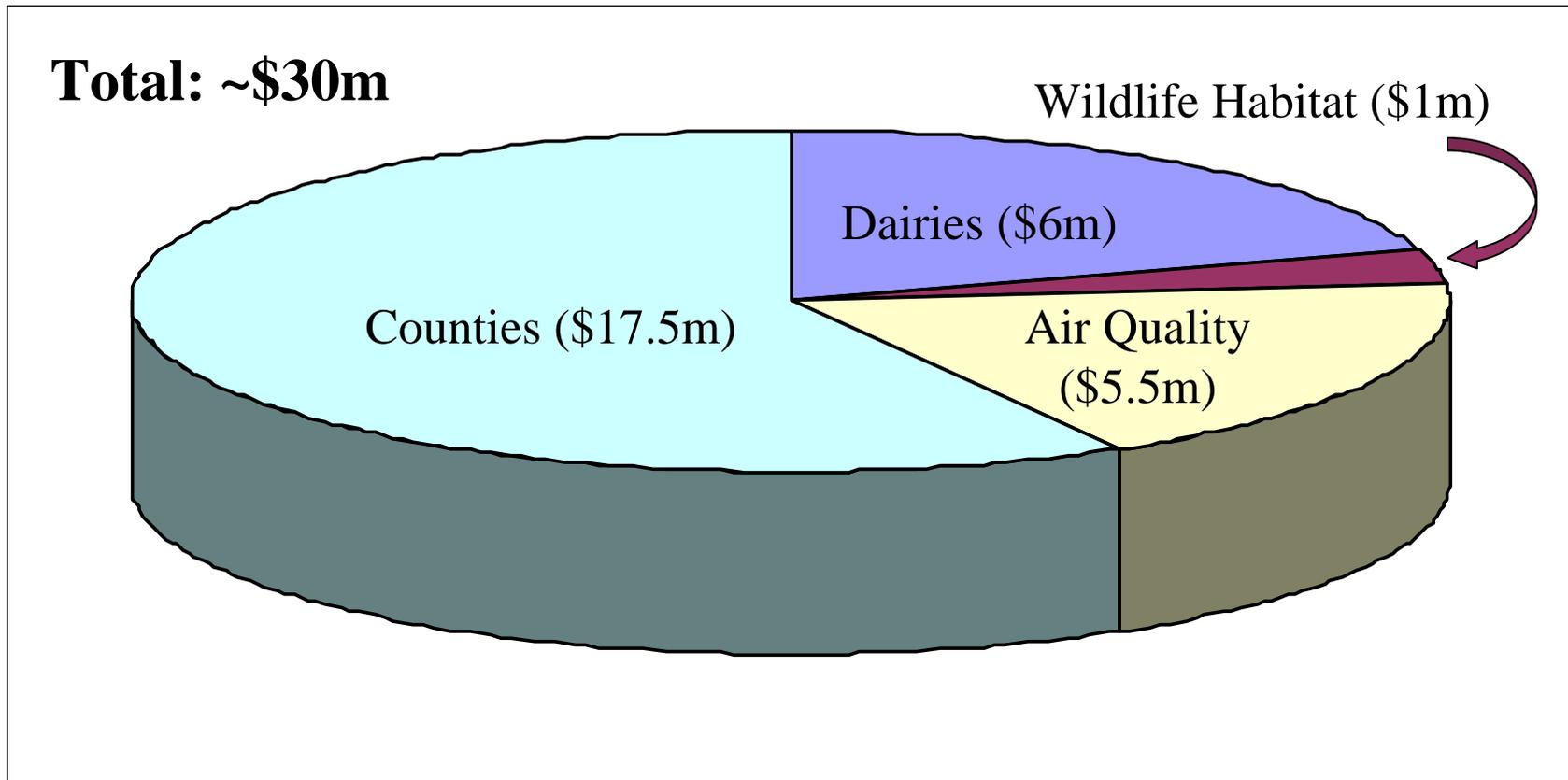
# ***EQIP***

## *Environmental Quality Incentives Program*

- Voluntary
- Cropland, rangeland, grassland, pastureland, private non-industrial forestland
- Statewide Initiatives
- County Allocations for Local Resource Concerns
- Competitive application/ranking process
- 50 – 90% cost-share to install “approved conservation practices”



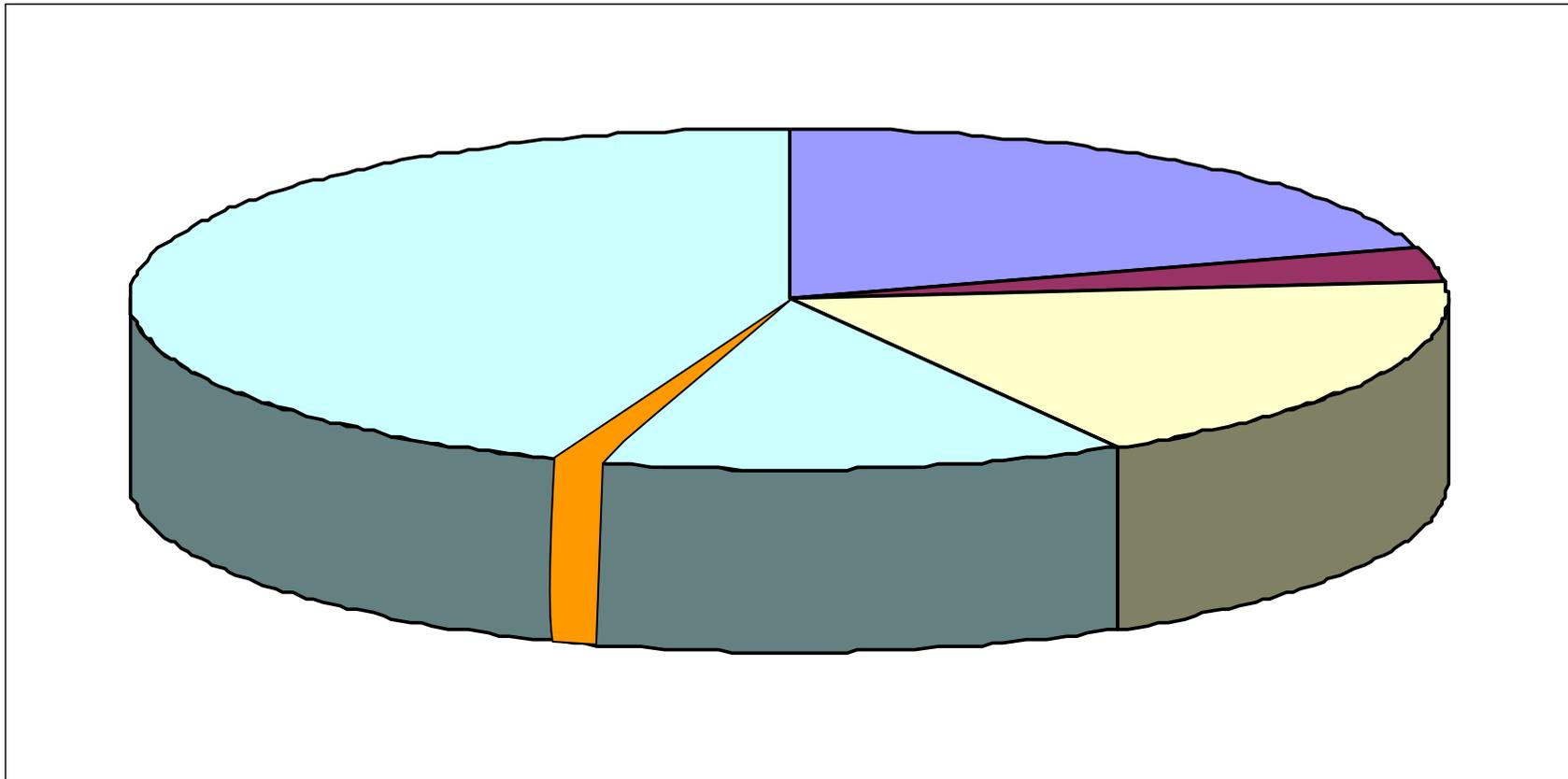
# ***FY-08 EQIP in California***





# ***FY-08 EQIP in California***

**Amador County: \$276,000**





# ***FY-08 EQIP in Amador County***

## ***\$276,000***

### **Local Resource Concerns**

- Ecological Health
- Fuel Load Reduction
- Pollutant Reduction on Irrigated Lands
- Rangeland Health
- Soil Erosion

### **Practices Approved for Payment:**

<b>Practice Code</b>	<b>Practice Name</b>
560	Access Road
575	Animal Trails and Walkways
314	Brush Management
322	Channel Bank Vegetation
584	Channel Stabilization
317	Composting Facility
327	Conservation Cover
656	Constructed Wetland
340	Cover Crop
342	Critical Area Planting
324	Deep Tillage
382	Fence
393	Filter Strip
394	Firebreak
490	Forest Site Preparation
666	Forest Stand Improvement
383	Fuel Break

etc.



# ***Conservation Practice Standards***

## **Section IV of the Field Office Technical Guide**

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/efotg/>



NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD  
**ACCESS ROAD**  
(Feet)  
**CODE 560**

**DEFINITION**

A travel-way for equipment and vehicles constructed as part of a conservation plan.

**PURPOSES**

To provide a fixed route for vehicular travel ...

**CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES...**

**CRITERIA**

Access roads shall be designed...

**CONSIDERATIONS**

(Air Quality, Water Quality, Cultural Resources, Endangered Species, etc)

**OPERATIONS &  
MAINTENANCE**

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD  
LAND RECLAMATION, ABANDONED MINED LAND  
(Ac.)  
CODE 543**

**DEFINITION**

Reclamation of land and water areas adversely affected by past mining activities

**PURPOSES**

- Stabilize abandoned mined areas to decrease erosion and sedimentation, support desirable vegetation and improve offsite water quality and or quantity
- Maintain or improve landscape visual and functional quality
- Protect public health, safety and general welfare

**CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES**

This practice applies to abandoned mined land that degrades the quality of the environment and prevents or interferes with the beneficial uses of soil, water, air, plant or animal resources, or endangers human health and safety.

<http://efotg.nrcs.usda.gov/references/public/CA/543std-9-07.pdf>

# ***RAMP-Related Conservation Practices***

- **452- Mine Shaft and Adit Closing**
- **453- Land Reclamation, Landslide Treatment**
- **455- Toxic Discharge Control (Coal only)**
- **543- Land Reclamation, Abandoned Mine Land**
- **544- Land Reclamation, Currently Mined Land**

# ***NRCS Mine Reclamation Activities***



**Mine hazards not *directly* identified as a Local Resource Concern**

**Mine reclamation practices not on the current list of approved Conservation Practices**

**Not on local RCD/Field Office**

**'Radar Screens'**

- legacy issues
- liability issues
- cost

An aerial photograph of a dry, eroded landscape. The terrain is characterized by a central gully that winds through the scene, with numerous smaller, branching channels and rills. The soil appears light-colored and sandy, with some darker patches of vegetation or rock. The overall appearance is one of significant soil erosion and water runoff.

**Practices that address Local Resource Concerns on agricultural lands where abandoned mines are present may be eligible for EQIP cost-share assistance**

- **Channel Stabilization for erosion control**
- **Critical Area Planting**
- **Use Exclusion for rangeland health**
- **Upland Wildlife Habitat Management**

“...trying to use EQIP funds for this will hinge on 2 items:

1 - **the requirement for agricultural production**

this may be ok if there are other resources to consider ie...timber and range... and there would be practices in the plan to address those resources....;

2 - **the ability to rank high enough to be competitive** for funding so the landowner would have to have an interest in conservation beyond the issues of abandoned mines on the property and the willingness and ability financially to do the project as planned...”

**Mike Brenner**  
**NRCS District Conservationist**  
**Auburn, CA**

“...If for example I had a producer that ran cattle and wanted to apply for EQIP and do some water development, brush management, and cross fence and then also wanted to fence out abandoned mine sites using exclusion fencing they would more than likely get funded.

If they only wanted to fence out the mine site and plant it funding it would be tough at least with our local ranking criteria...”

**Amy Rocha**  
**NRCS District Conservationist**  
**Jackson, CA**



*Thank you,*

*Julia Grim*

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