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Federal program to bring conservation support to thousands of acres in southern Indiana

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“Since nearly 90% of the land in SISL is owned and managed by private landowners, it is critical to our rural way of life, including our rich agricultural and natural heritage, that these landowners have the support and resources needed to sustainably manage their lands,” SISL Program Coordinator Michael Spalding said in a news release. “Furthermore, having a landscape dominated by rural uses supports the critical missions of our four military installations and ranges.”

Federal authorities first gave SISL its designation in February 2022 to advance conservation efforts in southern Indiana. The landscape partnership is coordinated by the Conservation Law Center at Indiana University’s Maurer School of Law.

The new Regional Conservation Partnership Program includes representation from NSA Crane, Atterbury-Muscatatuck Training Center, The Conservation Fund, The Nature Conservancy, Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative, American Bird Conservancy, Let the Sunshine IN, Indiana Forestry and Woodland Owners Association, Indiana DNR Division of Fish and Wildlife, Central Indiana Land Trust, and Indiana State Department of Agriculture Division of Soil Conservation.

Partners in the project say the new efforts will help educate land owners and supply them with tools to protect cropland, surface waters, timberland and more.

“This RCPP is among the largest public investments in Indiana conservation ever,” said Conservation Law Center Executive Director Christian Freitag said in a news release. “This project will make our water cleaner, our forests healthier, and help us address growing climate change issues like heavier drought and flood cycles. And it’s all voluntary. Everyone can support efforts like these.”

Landowners interested in learning more about conversation at their farms or forestland are encouraged to reach out to Spalding at mbspalding@sentinellandscapes.org or 812-855-1898.