

Fact Sheet

Wetland Reserve Program (WRP)

The Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) offers landowners the opportunity to protect, restore and enhance wetlands on their property in permanent or 30-year easements. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides technical/financial support to help landowners. The program offers payments, based on the agricultural land value, for wetlands that have previously been drained and converted to agricultural uses. In all cases, the landowner retains ownership and responsibility for the land. The landowner controls access to the land; the right to hunt, fish or other appropriate recreational uses; and may sell or lease the land.

To be eligible for WRP, land must be restorable and be suitable for wildlife benefits. This includes:

- Wetlands cleared and/or drained for farming, pasture or timber production
- Lands adjacent to restorable wetlands that contribute significantly to wetland functions and values
- Previously restored wetlands that need long-term protection
- Upland areas needed to provide an adequate ecological buffer or otherwise contribute to defining a manageable boundary
- Drained wooded wetlands where hydrology will be fully restored
- Existing or restorable riparian habitat corridors that connect protected wetlands
- Lands substantially altered by flooding where there is a likelihood of successful wetland restoration.

Land that is eligible for WRP:

- Wetland converted after December 23, 1985
- Conservation Reserve Program contract lands where trees have been successfully established
- Federal lands
- Lands where restoration is impossible.



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Three options to protect, restore and enhance wetlands and associated uplands:

Permanent Easements. The easement is attached to the property deed, ensuring that future owners of the property will preserve the wetland for generations. USDA will pay 100 percent of the restoration and legal costs to establish the easement. In addition, the landowner receives a payment for a permanent easement.

30-Year Easements. These easements expire at the end of 30 years. Easement payments are 75 percent of what would be paid for a permanent easement and 75 percent of the restoration costs. USDA will pay the legal costs associated with establishing the easement.

Restoration Cost-Share Agreement. This is a 10-year agreement to restore degraded or destroyed wetlands and associated upland habitat. USDA pays 75 percent of the restoration cost. No easement is placed on the property, and there is no easement or other land-incentive payments.

To offer a WRP easement, you must have owned the land for at least one year prior to enrollment, with limited expectations. To participate in a 10-year restoration cost-share agreement, you need to only show evidence of ownership.

Wetland conservation and the WRP provide many benefits for the entire community. This includes improved water quality, enhanced habitat for wildlife, reduced soil erosion and reduced flooding. Landowners interested in either the general CRP sign-up or the continuous sign-up should contact NRCS.

For more information, contact:

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