



Wetlands Reserve Program

Enrollment Options

- Permanent Easement
- 30-Year Easement
- Restoration Cost-Share Agreement

Acceptance In the Program

Acceptance in the program is based on a score derived from an environmental ranking and the preliminary restoration plan for offered acres.



May is American Wetlands Month

Wetlands Conservation



Wet Feet in Sabine Parish



Looking to increase his grazing land, Sabine Parish cattle producer Conrad Cathey bought a 105-acre tract of land near Many, Louisiana. He moved his cattle to his new pastures only to discover the land was too wet the majority of the year to be suitable for grazing.

“Water was up to my hip at certain times of the year,” said Cathey. “There was no way to make it work—wet feet and cows don’t mix.”

After moving his cattle from his new pastures, he was stumped as to what to do with the land—until he heard about NRCS’ Wetlands Reserve Program.

“It was just a stroke of luck,” said Cathey. “I was listening to the radio one day and heard about the Wetlands Reserve Program. It seemed a natural fit.”

Cathey worked with District Conservationist John Rogers to develop a plan to restore his cattle pasture to its natural wetland state. So far, he





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Conrad Cathey

has created shallow water areas, established food and pollinator plots, and installed wood duck nesting boxes. He is planning to install water control structures to control the water height of the pool stage of his shallow water areas, and he will be planting trees that enjoy wet feet—such as cypress, various oaks, and buttonbush shrubs.

Bald eagles have been spotted flying over the farm, along with hawks, herons, egrets, and other shorebirds—birds who like wet feet! Turkey and deer have been photographed in abundance by game cameras, and Cathey's wood duck nesting boxes have yielded baby ducks throughout the spring.

"There was very little game before, and certainly no ducks," said Cathey. "Since we started the WRP restoration, we have had an unusual amount of duck settings—three this spring!"

"I just love watching them," said Cathey. "I still hunt, but now I shoot with a camera!"

The Wetlands Reserve Program is a voluntary program offering landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands on their property. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides technical and financial support to help landowners with their wetland

restoration efforts. The NRCS' goal is to achieve the greatest wetland functions and values, along with optimum wildlife habitat, on every acre enrolled in the program. This program offers landowners an opportunity to establish long-term conservation and wildlife practices and protection.

To find out more about the Wetlands Reserve Program, contact your local NRCS office or visit: <http://www.la.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/WRP/index.html>.



Conrad Cathey Conservationist