

Wetlands Reserve Program

Benefit the Land, Secure Your Future

Wetlands

Wetlands are unique ecosystems with an array of biologically diverse plants and wildlife. They are natural areas that are often wet but may not be wet year round. Wetlands offer valuable environmental benefits, financial security, and alternative enterprise opportunities for landowners.

Wetlands can be large areas, awkward sized low areas in the middle of a field, or land adjacent to watercourses, creeks, or tributaries. Well-managed wetlands offer INCOME and SOLUTIONS for Tennessee landowners.

The Program

The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) is a voluntary restoration program that provides technical assistance to restore, enhance, or improve wetland resources on private lands. The WRP is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture NRCS. In many cases, even minimal assistance can transform low-lying areas and floodplains into functional and attractive wetlands.

Small or Large - WRP Works!

WRP is not just for large tracts of land. Even small and medium-sized sites—from less than 20 to over 200 acres—can offer benefits and value. All these areas need are:

- *Good planning*
- *Simple water-level controls*
- *Help with seeding and planting*
- *Minimal long-term maintenance*

WRP works on small farms, marginal land, or wet and troublesome areas. It works for Tennessee landowners wanting improved wildlife, restored wetlands, and a solution to recurring crop losses.

You Maintain Control

WRP landowners maintain the title to the land, control access to it, and can use it for non-developed recreational activities like hunting or fishing, nature-based tourism, and subsurface mineral rights. The contract simply requires that the land use is compatible with planned conservation objectives.



Wetland Benefits...

- Alternatives for areas where crops are lost to high water
- Increase wildlife opportunities
- Ground water recharge
- Improve water quality by filtering out sediment
- Turn economic burdens into opportunity
- Solve problems you have on the farm
- Improve water quality on/off the farm
- Create a home for wildlife

Easements Made Easy

NRCS works hard to make WRP program requirements, applications, ranking processes, and timeframes MANAGEABLE. NRCS ranks eligible land to determine which applications can be funded. Those with higher environmental rankings are funded first. NRCS then offers a payment to purchase an easement on the land based on its fair market value. The landowner can then accept or reject the offer and can withdraw from WRP without any penalties.

The geographic area rate caps are posted on the Tennessee NRCS Web site. Go to <http://www.tn.nrcs.usda.gov/>. To find WRP, click on Programs. NRCS pays for surveys, title work, and recording fees. Once the legal work is done, NRCS will follow through on restoration plans and let the wetland come alive.

It's Your Decision

WRP can PAY YOU for letting your land be what it was intended to be. It's a solution with economical, practical, and personal benefits. If you think WRP is right for you, visit your local NRCS office at the USDA Service Center. Submitting an application does not obligate you to continue with the WRP, it just starts the process to determine if your land is eligible.