

Enrollment Options

WRP offers three enrollment options:

- 1) Permanent Easement is a conservation easement in perpetuity. USDA pays 100% of the easement value and up to 100% of restoration costs.
- 2) 30-Year Easement is an easement that expires after 30 years. USDA pays up to 75% of the easement value and up to 75% of restoration costs.
- 3) Restoration Cost-Share
Agreements are 10 year agreements to restore and enhance wetland functions and values without placing an easement on the enrolled acres. USDA pays up to 75% of restoration costs.



For More Information

- Visit your local NRCS office and fill out an application. The program process is as follows:
 - Preliminary restoration plan and cost-estimate are developed.
 - Applications are ranked for selection.
 - Applicants are notified of acceptance.
 - Easement or agreement process begins.
- More information is available at <http://www.il.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/>

WETLANDS RESERVE PROGRAM

Restoring
Illinois' Wetlands

What is WRP?

Reauthorized in the 2008 Farm Bill, the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) was created to offer landowners the means and opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands on their property. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) manages the program as well as provides technical and financial support to help landowners who participate in WRP.

Why Wetlands?

Illinois has lost over 90 percent of its original wetland area due to development pressures from human settlement. Wetlands perform many critical environmental functions, which include providing habitat for fish and wildlife; improving water quality by filtering sediments and chemicals; reducing flooding; recharging groundwater; and protecting biological diversity. Restoring wetlands with WRP offers farmers battling marginal land an opportunity to relieve the burden of working that ground and obtain economic gains from a conservation easement.



How Does WRP Work?

- WRP is a statewide, voluntary program.
- Easement payments are based on pre-determined Geographic Area Rate Cap amount.
- Wetland restoration costs may be reimbursed up to 100%, depending on enrollment type.
- Landowners retain ownership of the land and control access to the land.
- Landowners retain limited recreational uses of the easement area, including hunting and fishing rights.
- Landowner may sell the land.
- NRCS performs annual status reviews and easement monitoring of the site.

Eligibility

Landowner Eligibility:

- Must have owned the land for at least seven years. (All waiver requests are considered.)
- Must be in compliance with highly erodible land and wetland conservation provisions.
- Must meet Adjusted Gross Income Limitation.

Land Eligibility:

- Must be privately owned; government owned land is not eligible.
- Lands adjacent to restorable wetlands contribute significantly to wetland functions and values.
- Previously restored wetlands that need long-term protection.
- Drained, wooded wetlands where hydrology will be 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 at a reasonable cost.

