

## Wetlands



- provide habitat for fish and wildlife, including threatened and endangered species;
- improve water quality by filtering sediments and chemicals;
- reduce flooding;
- recharge groundwater;
- protect biological diversity; and
- provide opportunities for educational, scientific and limited recreational activities.

Along with these benefits, restoring wetlands can offer a source of income for landowners.

South Dakota has lost many of its original wetlands due to pressures from human settlement.

**WRP is an opportunity for relieving the burden of trying to farm marginal lands and provides an economic gain from a conservation easement.**



## How to Apply:

For a no-obligation consultation, contact your local NRCS office. Otherwise, contact the NRCS State Office at (605) 352-1200.

To get started, landowners work with NRCS to develop a preliminary restoration plan and a cost estimate. During the fiscal year, applications are ranked for selection and funding.

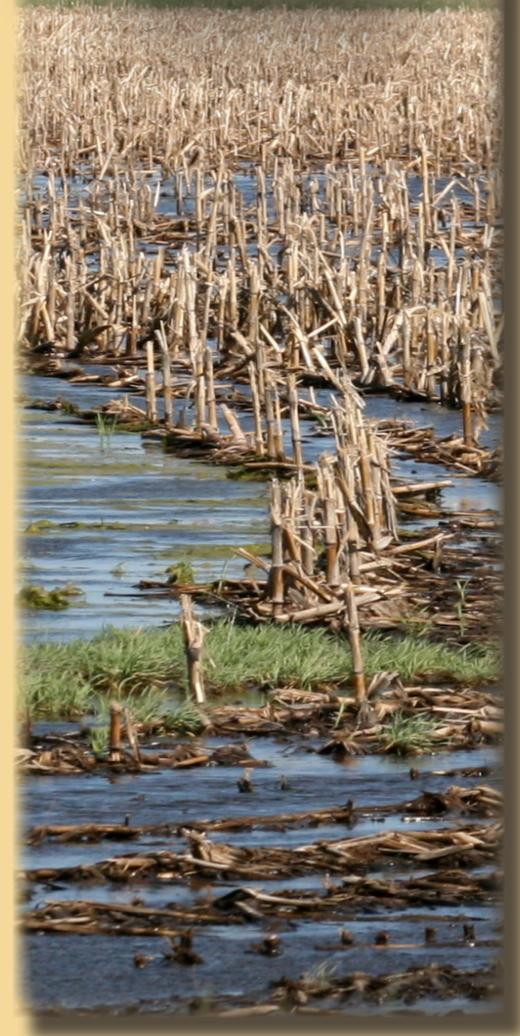
Acceptance into the program is based on a score derived from an environmental ranking and the preliminary restoration plan for offered acres. Once applicants are accepted, the easement or agreement process begins. Landowners will receive payment after the Warranty Deed is filed. Perpetual easement payments are based on the appraised value of the land. Values for 30-year easements are 75 percent of perpetual easement payments. Contact your local NRCS office for local payment rates.



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South Dakota · September 2010 · SD-FS-68  
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# What are you doing with your wetlands?



Consider *Restoration* through the  
**Wetlands Reserve  
Program (WRP)**



# Restoring South Dakota's Wetlands through the Wetlands Reserve Program

The **Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)** is our nation's premier wetland restoration program. The U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) manages the voluntary program.

WRP provides technical and financial assistance to private landowners and tribes to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands on their property. WRP offers payments for wetlands and associated uplands that have been degraded or converted to agricultural uses.

## WRP allows the landowner to retain:

- Control of access (public access is not required),
- Title and right to convey title (easement transfers with the land),
- Quiet enjoyment,
- The right to hunt, fish, trap, and pursue other undeveloped and appropriate recreational uses,
- Subsurface resources and water rights.

## Landowner Eligibility

- Must have owned the land for at least seven years (waiver requests considered).
- Must be in compliance with highly erodible land and wetland conservation provisions.
- Must meet adjusted gross income (AGI) limitation.

## Land Eligibility

Land must be restorable and suitable for wetland and wildlife benefits. This includes:

- Cropped wetlands.
- Lands adjacent to restorable wetlands that contribute significantly to wetlands functions and values.
- Upland areas needed to provide an adequate ecological buffer or that otherwise contribute to defining a manageable boundary.
- Drained wetlands where hydrology will be restored.
- Existing or restorable riparian habitat corridors that link protected wetlands.
- Lands substantially altered by flooding where there is a likelihood of successful wetland restoration at a reasonable cost.
- Flooded potholes-agricultural land including cropland and pastureland that has been flooded by a pothole, lake or closed basin.

## Ineligible lands

- Wetlands converted after December 23, 1985.
- Certain Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract lands where trees have been successfully established.
- Government lands (state or federal).
- Lands where conditions make restoration impossible.

## Enrollment Options

- **Permanent Easements:** A conservation easement in perpetuity. USDA pays 100 percent of the easement value and up to 100 percent of the restoration costs.
- **30-year Easement:** An easement that expires after 30 years. USDA pays up to 75 percent of the easement value and up to 75 percent of the restoration costs.
- **Restoration Cost-Share Agreement:** A 10-year agreement to restore or enhance the wetland functions and values without placing an easement on the enrolled acres. USDA pays up to 75 percent of the restoration costs.
- For both permanent and 30-year easements, USDA pays all costs associated with recording the easement in the local land records office, including recording fees, survey, title insurance, and closing fees.
- **30-year tribal contracts.** USDA pays up to 75 percent of the value and up to 75 percent of the restoration costs.

