

# NRCS NEWS RELEASE

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## **NRCS Funding Available for Wetland Protection and Habitat Improvement Projects in Minnesota, Proposals Due February 10, 2012**

ST PAUL, MN, January 26, 2012 — USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Conservationist Don Baloun today announced a funding opportunity for wetland protection, restoration and enhancement activities on eligible lands in Minnesota. Proposals for projects are due to the NRCS State Office in St. Paul, by February 10, 2012. Funding comes through the agency's Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Program (WREP), with up to \$17 million available nationwide.

“This is a great opportunity for Minnesota stakeholders to carry out high-priority wetland protection and improve wildlife habitat,” Baloun said. “WREP is an important conservation tool and I encourage everyone who is interested in applying to send us their proposals as soon as possible.”

WREP is a voluntary conservation program that works through partnership agreements with states, nongovernmental organizations and tribes, as defined in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. WREP is a component of the Wetlands Reserve Program through which NRCS enters into agreements with eligible partners to leverage resources to carry out high-priority wetland protection and improve wildlife habitat.

Benefits to partners in WREP agreements include:

- Wetland Restoration in high-priority areas;
- The ability to cost-share restoration or enhancement components beyond those required by NRCS;
- Participating in management or monitoring of selected project locations; and

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- Opportunities to use innovative restoration methods and practices.

“Red River of the North flood mitigation efforts along with numerous water quality projects could benefit by using WREP funding to expand traditional wildlife habitat projects”, Don Baloun added.

Eligible partners may submit general WREP proposals for individual, watershed-wide or larger geographical area projects. WREP partners are required to contribute a financial or technical assistance fund match.

State NRCS staffs will use a competitive process to evaluate the proposals. Recommended proposals will then be competed nationally for final selection and funding.

This announcement is for General WREP proposals. Proposals submitted through the Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative are being solicited under a separate Request for Proposals as published in the Federal Register on January 3, 2012. WREP proposals submitted by fax or through Grants.gov will not be accepted.

To submit a proposal or receive information about General WREP, visit [www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov) or contact Tim Koehler, Assistant State Conservationist-Easements, 651-602-7857, [tim.koehler@mn.usda.gov](mailto:tim.koehler@mn.usda.gov)

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