

**Nebraska Fact Sheet:**

**Rainwater Basin Wetlands Reserve  
Enhancement Program**

January 2013

**Overview**

The Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Program (WREP) is a voluntary program available through the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). WREP provides technical and financial assistance to eligible landowners to address wetland, wildlife habitat, soil, water, and related natural resource concerns on private lands in an environmentally beneficial and cost-effective manner. The program provides an opportunity for landowners to receive financial incentives to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands in exchange for placing marginal land into a conservation easement, while maintaining irrigation flexibility on surrounding cropland.

**Goals**

To restore and protect wetland and upland acres for the benefit of wildlife within the Rainwater Basin wetland complex, while maintaining the right to allow a pivot to cross through a WREP easement.

**Benefits**

WREP participants benefit by:

- Maintaining profitability by allowing pivots to cross through wetlands to irrigate surrounding cropland or pasture not enrolled into WREP;
- Receiving financial and technical assistance in return for restoring and protecting wetlands;
- Seeing a reduction in problems associated with farming wet areas, and;
- Receiving incentives to develop wildlife recreational opportunities on their land.



Wetlands benefit all Nebraskans by providing fish and wildlife habitat; improving water quality by filtering sediments and chemicals; reducing flooding; recharging ground water; protecting biological diversity; and providing opportunities for educational, scientific, and recreational activities.

**How WREP Works**

The program offers three enrollment options:

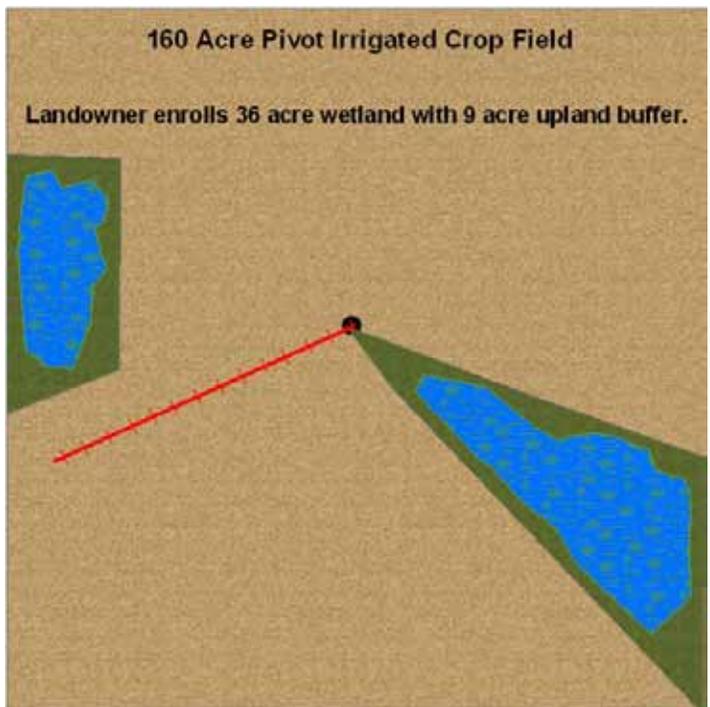
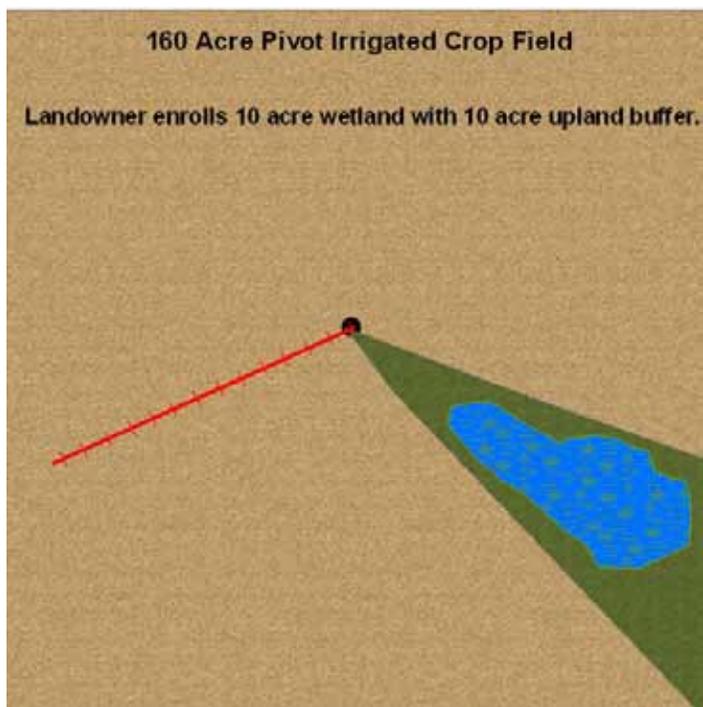
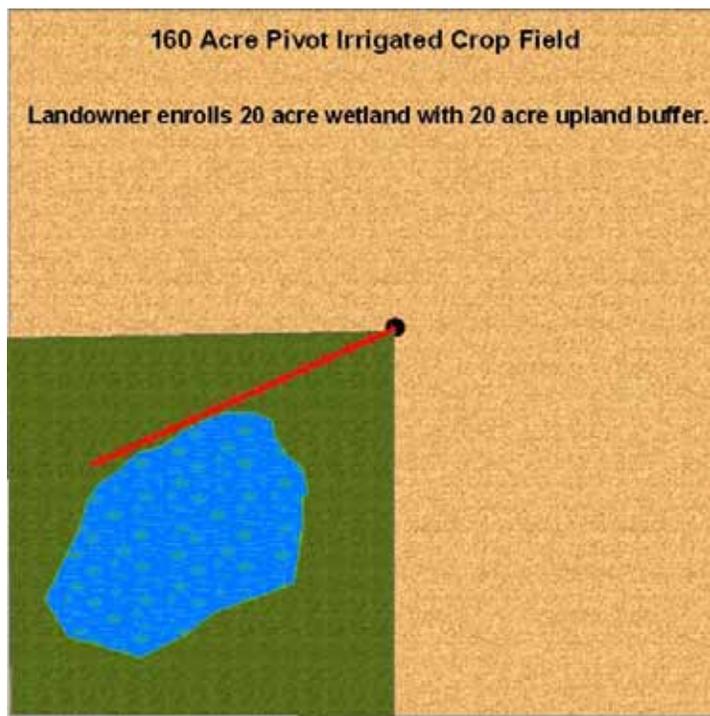
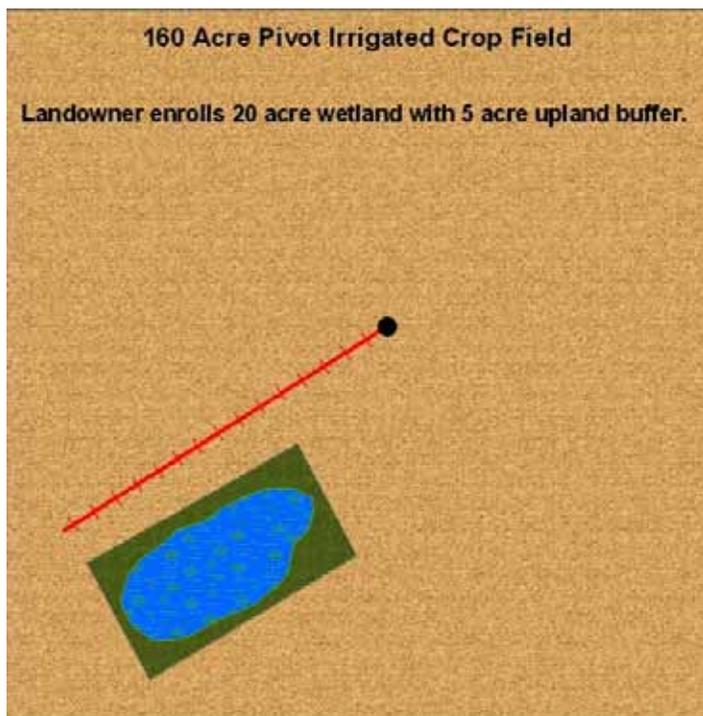
1. **Permanent Easement.** This is a conservation easement in perpetuity. Easement payments are usually based on the Nebraska Geographical Area Rate Caps (GARCs), *see map on reverse*. In addition to paying for the easement, NRCS pays up to 100 percent of the restoration costs.
2. **30-Year Easement.** Easement payments through this option are 75 percent of what would be paid for a permanent easement. NRCS also pays up to 75 percent of the restoration costs.
3. **Reserved Grazing-Rights:** Permanent or 30-Year Easement. The easement payment is based off of the standard permanent or 30-year easement value that is then reduced by a predetermined amount for the retained grazing rights. NRCS pays up to 100 percent of the restoration cost for permanent easements and up to 75 percent of the restoration cost for 30-year easements.

Applications are accepted through a continuous sign-up process. Landowners and Tribes can file an application at any time at their local NRCS field office. However, applications must be received prior to an announced ranking cut-off date to be eligible for current funding. Eligible applications received after the cut-off date will be considered for funding at a later date. Landowners should contact their local NRCS field office for an application.



# Examples of WREP Enrollment Options

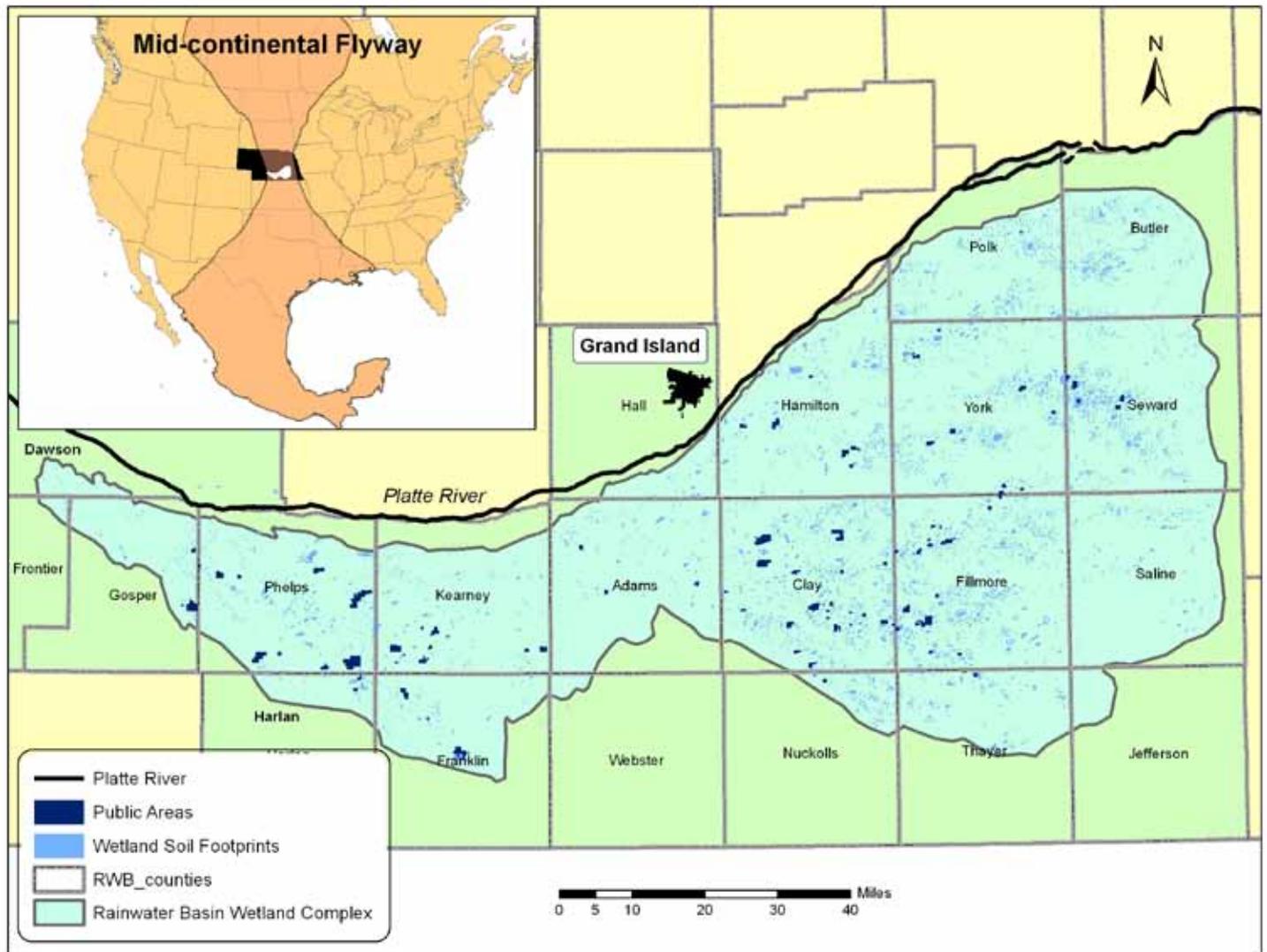
In these examples NRCS works with landowners to integrate WREP within the agricultural operation.



Through WREP, 960 acres of wetlands and upland habitats adjacent to, and within, pivot circles will be restored in the Rainwater Basin wetland complex. This project proposes restoring and protecting wetlands in an active agricultural landscape by allowing center pivots to cross wetlands, ensuring wetlands are compatible with the agriculture production in this region. The above examples show how WREP may be applied in the Rainwater Basin to restore wetlands in cropland settings.

KEY	
	Crop Field
	WREP Upland Buffer
	WREP Wetland
	Irrigation Pivot

# Rainwater Basin WREP Sign-up Area



To sign up for the Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Program (WREP) or the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), please contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service office located USDA Service Center listed in the telephone book under U.S. Department of Agriculture. Information is also available at: <http://www.ne.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/>.