

Fact Sheet - February 2010

## WRP Overview:

The goal of Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) is to attain the greatest wetland functions and values, while optimizing wildlife habitat on all enrolled acres.

### WRP is:

- voluntary program.
- provides technical and financial assistance to eligible landowners.
- addresses wetland, wildlife habitat, and related natural resource concerns on private lands WRP provides landowners technical and financial assistance to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands.
- landowners will be asked to retire marginal land from agriculture.

## What Lands Qualify

To be eligible for WRP, land must be restorable and be suitable for wildlife benefits. This includes:

- Wetlands farmed under natural conditions;
- Farmed wetlands;
- Prior converted cropland;
- Tail water Pits and adjacent draws
- Rangeland or pasture, where the hydrology has been significantly degraded and can be restored;
- Riparian areas which link protected wetlands;
- Lands adjacent to protected wetlands that contribute significantly to wetland functions and values; and
- Precisely restored wetlands (Conservation Reserve Program [CRP] land is eligible if it meets WRP requirements.)

Land that is adjacent to eligible land may be enrolled if it will maximize wildlife benefits and:

- Is farmed wetland and adjoining land is enrolled in CRP with the highest functions and values and is likely to return to production after leaving CRP.

## How Does WRP Work

1. Landowners may file an application for conservation easement or cost-share agreement NRCS. Applicants are volunteering to limit future use of offered acres, but retain private ownership.
2. All applications will be ranked using the Wetlands Reserve Program, Texas Ranking Criteria.
3. Ranking will be made in consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



*Playa Wetland with diversified plant community and large tailwater pit.*



*Farmed playa wetland with visible sedimentation.*

## (Continuation)

# Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) in the High Plains Playa Region and Rolling Plains Riparian Areas

### **WRP offers three enrollment options:**

#### **Permanent Easement.**

This is a conservation easement in perpetuity. Easement payment will be the lesser of: the agricultural value of the land, an established payment cap, or an amount offered by the landowner. In addition to paying for the easement, USDA pays 100 percent of the costs of restoring the wetland.

#### **30-year Easement.**

This is a conservation easement lasting 30 years. Easement payments are 75 percent of what would be paid for a permanent easement. USDA also pays 75 percent of restoration costs.

#### **Restoration Cost-Share Agreement.**

This is an agreement (generally for a minimum of 10 years in duration) to reestablish degraded or lost wetland habitat. USDA pays 75 percent of the cost of the restoration activity. This does not place an easement on the property. The landowner provides the restoration site without reimbursements.



*Geographical Area Rate Cap for the High Plains, South Plains and Rolling Plains regions.*



*Three tailwater pits in large Playa Wetland with multiple landuses.*



*Overgrazed Playa Wetland*