



WETLANDS

*They're bountiful dynamic beneficial helpful
diverse beautiful and... home to a lot of wild and wonderful things.*

And now it's easier than ever to make your wetlands even more beneficial AND rewarding.

Following are the basic steps to restoring and protecting wetlands through the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)...

1. Sign Up for Easements

Begin by making an appointment with your local NRCS office. During the meeting, you may review eligibility and easement requirements, submit a non-binding application form (this is not a commitment to participate), indicate your choice of a permanent or 30-year easement, and provide a copy of the property deed. You will also be asked to provide your restoration objectives and vision for your property.

2. Develop a Plan and Cost Estimate

NRCS will visit the site (in some cases other agencies may also participate) and evaluate the land's eligibility in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). Then the landowner works with NRCS, FWS, the state wildlife agency and the local conservation district to develop a preliminary plan for restoring the wetland.

3. Receive a Competitive Selection Score

Applications will be ranked to ensure that available funds are used to restore the most environmentally and economically valuable wetlands. Each state establishes a ranking system that is sensitive to the restoration efforts and priorities within the state. Applicants will be notified of the status of their applications. If an application is selected for funding, NRCS will use an appraisal procedure or a market survey to determine the market value of the land intended for WRP. The landowner then will be offered a payment amount for a permanent or 30-year easement in the form of an Option Agreement to Purchase.



4. Accept the Easement Offer

After the landowner and the NRCS state conservationist sign the Option Agreement to Purchase, the easement acquisition process begins. NRCS will acquire title insurance and take other actions necessary to record the easement. After the easement is recorded, the landowner is paid, and the wetland will be restored according to the restoration plan.

5. Be Patient

It can take 12 months from the time a landowner signs an Option Agreement to Purchase with NRCS to close the WRP easement and receive payment. It will take 1-3 years for restoration to be completed.

Landowner Rights, Responsibilities and Prohibitions

In all cases, landowners retain ownership and responsibility for the land, including any property taxes. Landowners control access to the land, have the right to hunt, fish and pursue other appropriate recreational uses. They may sell or lease land enrolled in WRP but all easement restrictions will remain in place.

Landowners are responsible for controlling noxious plants and pests, maintaining fences, and reporting to NRCS any condition which may adversely affect the natural values of the easement. **Prohibitions include:**

- Haying, mowing or seed harvest
- Planting any crop
- Plowing, burning, disking, etc.
- Constructing buildings or structures
- Dumping waste
- Draining, dredging, or filling of wetlands
- Harvesting wood products
- Tampering with water-control structures (unless authorized by NRCS)
- Allowing livestock access
- Diverting water onto or out of the easement

(Landowners may request from NRCS uses which are compatible with protecting or enhancing the wetland and associated upland habitat.)

For more information

Call or visit your local Natural Resources Conservation Service office today or visit www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov for additional information regarding WRP or other conservation programs.