

Let's Talk Wetland Mitigation

What it is & how it works



Wetlands Have Value!

Wetlands are one of nature's most productive ecosystems, providing many ecological, societal, and economic benefits.

Private landowners play a pivotal role in restoring and protecting wetland health on working agricultural lands.

Compliance with the Food Security Act (FSA) conservation provisions are required for USDA programs eligibility, including crop insurance premium subsidies.

If a producer drains, dredges, or fills a wetland on agricultural land, those wetland acres and functions must be replaced, either through on-site mitigation or by purchasing credits from a wetland mitigation bank.

What is Mitigation?

Wetland mitigation is the compensation of lost acres, functions, and values from a converted wetland through restoration, enhancement, or creation of new wetlands at another location.

Converted Wetlands (CW) are wetlands that have been drained (dredged, filled, leveled, or otherwise manipulated, including removal of woody vegetation) for the purpose of or to make possible the production of an agricultural commodity after the Dec. 23, 1985 Food Security Act (FSA) was set in motion.

The FSA allows landowners the option to alter wetlands through mitigation or replacement of the wetland's lost functions, values, and acres. Mitigation sites may be restored, created, or enhanced on your own land, on another person's land, or on land held by the mitigation bank. Preservation of a wetland is not an authorized form of mitigation under the FSA, but these are:

- **Restoration:** The re-establishment of function, historical function, or both, to a former or degraded wetland.
- **Enhancement:** Improvement of either an undisturbed or degraded wetland site to increase specific wetland functions.
- **Creation:** The development of a wetland where a wetland had not previously existed.

Wetland Mitigation Requirements

- Implementation of an NRCS approved mitigation plan to replace the wetland functions, values, and acres lost to conversion.
- Mitigation must be completed prior to, or concurrent with, wetland conversion activities in order to remain compliant and be eligible for USDA program participation.
- A minimum (acreage) ratio of 1 to 1 is required. Ratios may increase due to differences in ecosystems, wetland functions, and values that exist between converted and mitigated wetlands.
- Mitigated wetlands require a recorded warranty easement deed, which will be in effect for the duration of time the converted wetland remains in agricultural production.
- Mitigation activities and costs may not be funded at the expense of the Federal Government.
- NRCS Program participants may also purchase wetland banking credits from an approved mitigation bank to compensate for converted wetlands.



What is a Wetland Mitigation Bank?

Wetland mitigation banking offers landowners/ agricultural producers an option to mitigate wetlands that have been or will be lost through impacts such as drainage, dredging, ditching or other alterations of a wetland. Landowners/ Producers without on-site options for mitigating can choose to purchase credits from a wetland mitigation bank to compensate for the lost wetland on their property.

Wetland mitigation banks are sponsored by the private individuals or entities that establish the mitigation process. The sponsor is responsible for the cost of wetland development, as well as long-term maintenance of the wetland bank to ensure it continues to function as designed and offers wetland benefits in the future.

Credits are determined using a functional assessment procedure that evaluates individual wetland functions. The price of credits is negotiated between the buyer and the seller. As credits are sold, they are subtracted from the bank until all available credits have been purchased.

To learn more about wetland mitigation and wetland mitigation banks, contact your local IL NRCS office.



Your local NRCS contact is:



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