

The Wetlands Reserve Easement Program (WRE) is a voluntary program offering landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands on their property. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides technical and financial support to help landowners with their wetland restoration efforts. The NRCS goal is to achieve the greatest wetland functions and values, along with optimum wildlife habitat, on every acre enrolled in the program. This program offers landowners an opportunity to establish long-term conservation and wildlife practices and protection.



PRE-APPLICATION

WRE is a voluntary easement program with specific rules and outcomes that lead to the restoration of your site to a natural condition. As you consider applying, make sure you understand both the benefits and changes to your land ownership rights.

When enrolling in WRE your land rights will change and that means you must retire associated programs (such as FSA benefits) with the site. If you are unclear about any requirements, please ask your local field office for more information.

NRCS staff will work with you each step to provide you the information you need to determine if WRE is a good fit for your long-term goals.



STEP 1—APPLICATION

6 months*

- The landowner prepares and submits application with assistance from local NRCS staff.
- The application is routed to the NRCS WRE ranking team for review and scoring.
- Once ranked, the application is submitted to the State Easement Program Specialist for selection.



STEP 2—OFFER AND AGREEMENT

1 month*

- If selected, the WRE Agreement for Purchase of Conservation Easement is sent to the landowner for signature(s); agreement is signed and returned.



STEP 3—EASEMENT ACQUISITION AND CLOSING

9 months—2 years*

- A legal survey is completed and all appropriate inquiries are satisfied.
- NRCS assists landowner in developing a conservation plan.
- The landowner clears title encumbrances and provides a clear title for the property. Examples of encumbrances include: oil or gas lease, mining leases, above ground utilities, etc.
- Easement documents are approved by Indiana NRCS staff; closing occurs; landowner easement payments are issued after closing.



STEP 4—LAND RESTORATION

up to 3 years*

- The wetland restoration plan designed and constructed.
- The vegetation plan is developed and implemented.

** Commonly experienced timeframes and activities. Actual timeframe at any step depends on the complexities of the title and project details.*

Interested in learning more? Contact your local NRCS/SWCD field office. The local office staff will become part of your team to help complete each phase of this process. You are encouraged to contact them with questions, comments, and ideas.

<http://www.in.nrcs.usda.gov/>